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THE LAST OF THE BARONS

The noble animal reared again.

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THE LAST OF THE BARONS

By

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

Illustrated by

E. POLLAK

VOLUME I

Charles Scribner's Sons
New York 1904

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"THE Earl of Warwick, commonly known, from the subsequent events, by the appellation of the *King-maker*, had distinguished himself by his gallantry in the field, by the hospitality of his table, by the magnificence, and still more by the generosity, of his expense, and by the spirited and bold manner which attended him in all his actions. The undesigning frankness and openness of his character rendered his conquest over men's affections the more certain and infallible; his presents were regarded as sure testimonies of esteem and friendship; and his professions as the overflowings of his genuine sentiments. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have daily lived at his board in the different manors and castles which he possessed in England; the military men, allured by his munificence and hospitality, as well as by his bravery, were zealously attached to his interests; the people in general bore him an unlimited affection; his numerous retainers were more devoted to his will, than to the prince or to the laws; AND HE WAS THE GREATEST, AS WELL AS THE LAST, OF THOSE MIGHTY BARONS WHO FORMERLY OVERAWED THE CROWN."—*Hume.*

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

I dedicate to you, my indulgent Critic and long-tried Friend, the work which owes its origin to your suggestion. Long since, you urged me to attempt a fiction which might borrow its characters from our own Records, and serve to illustrate some of those truths which History is too often compelled to leave to the Tale-teller, the Dramatist, and the Poet. Unquestionably, Fiction, when aspiring to something higher than mere romance, does not pervert, but elucidate Facts. He who employs it worthily must, like a biographer, study the time and the characters he selects, with a minute and earnest diligence which the general historian, whose range extends over centuries, can scarcely be expected to bestow upon the things and the men of a single epoch; his descriptions should fill up with colour and detail the cold outlines of the rapid chronicler; and, in spite of all that has been argued by pseudo-critics, the very fancy which urged and animated his theme should necessarily tend to increase the reader's practical and familiar acquaintance with the habits, the motives, and the modes of thought, which constitute the true idiosyncrasy of an age. More than all, to Fiction is permitted that liberal use of Analogical Hypothesis which is denied to History, and which, if sobered by research, and enlightened by that knowledge of mankind (without which Fiction can neither harm nor profit, for it becomes unreadable), tends to clear up much that were otherwise obscure, and to solve the disputes and difficulties of contradictory evidence by the philosophy of the human heart.

My own impression of the greatness of the labour to which you invited me, made me the more diffident

of success, inasmuch as the field of English historical fiction had been so amply cultivated not only by the most brilliant of our many glorious Novelists, but by later writers of high and merited reputation. But however the annals of our History have been exhausted by the industry of romance, the subject you finally pressed on my choice is unquestionably one which, whether in the delineation of character, the expression of passion, or the suggestion of historical truths, can hardly fail to direct the Novelist to paths wholly untrodden by his predecessors in the Land of Fiction.

Encouraged by you, I commenced my task—encouraged by you, I venture, on concluding it, to believe that, despite the partial adoption of that established compromise between the modern and the elder diction, which Sir Walter Scott so artistically improved from the more rugged phraseology employed by Strutt, and which later writers have perhaps somewhat over-hackneyed, I may yet have avoided all material trespass upon ground which others have already redeemed from the waste.—Whatever the produce of the soil I have selected, I claim, at least, to have cleared it with my own labour, and ploughed it with my own heifer.

The reign of Edward IV. is in itself suggestive of new considerations and unexhausted interest to those who accurately regard it. Then commenced the policy consummated by Henry VII.; then were broken up the great elements of the old feudal order; a new Nobility was called into power, to aid the growing Middle Class in its struggles with the ancient: and in the fate of the hero of the age, Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick, popularly called the King-maker, "the greatest as well as the last of those mighty Barons who formerly over-awed the Crown," * was involved the very principle of our existing civilisation. It

* Hume adds, "and rendered the people incapable of civil government;" a sentence, which, perhaps, judges too hastily the whole question at issue in our earlier history, between the jealousy of the Barons and the authority of the King.

adds to the wide scope of Fiction, which ever loves to explore the twilight, that, as Hume has truly observed—"No part of English history since the Conquest is so obscure, so uncertain, so little authentic or consistent, as that of the Wars between the two Roses." * It adds also to the importance of that conjectural research in which Fiction may be made so interesting and so useful, that—"this profound darkness falls upon us just on the eve of the restoration of letters;" † while amidst the gloom, we perceive the movement of those great and heroic passions in which Fiction finds delineations everlastingly new, and are brought in contact with characters sufficiently familiar for interest, sufficiently remote for adaptation to romance, and, above all, so frequently obscured by contradictory evidence, that we lend ourselves willingly to any one who seeks to help our judgment of the individual by tests taken from the general knowledge of mankind.

Round the great image of the Last of the Barons group Edward the Fourth, at once frank and false; the brilliant but ominous boyhood of Richard the Third; the accomplished Hastings, "a good knight and gentle, but somewhat dissolute of living;" ‡ the vehement and fiery Margaret of Anjou, the meek image of her "holy Henry," and the pale shadow of their son: there, may we see, also, the gorgeous Prelate, refining in policy and wile, as the enthusiasm and energy which had formerly upheld the Ancient Church pass into the stern and persecuted votaries of the New: We behold, in that social transition, the sober Trader —outgrowing the prejudices of the rude retainer or rustic franklin, from whom he is sprung—recognising sagaciously, and supporting sturdily, the sectarian interests of his order, and preparing the way for the mighty Middle Class in which our modern Civilisation, with its faults and its merits, has established its stronghold; while, in contrast to the measured and thoughtful notions of liberty which prudent Com-

* Hume. † Ibid.
‡ Chronicle of Edward V. in Stowe.

merce entertains, we are reminded of the political fanaticism of the secret Lollard,—of the *jacquerie* of the turbulent mob-leader; and perceive, amidst the various tyrannies of the time, and often partially allied with the war-like seignorie *—ever jealous against all kingly despotism,—the restless and ignorant movement of a democratic principle, ultimately suppressed, though not destroyed, under the Tudors, by the strong union of a Middle Class, anxious for security and order, with an Executive Authority determined upon absolute sway.

Nor should we obtain a complete and comprehensive view of that most interesting Period of Transition, unless we saw something of the influence which the sombre and sinister wisdom of Italian policy began to exercise over the councils of the great—a policy of refined stratagem—of complicated intrigue—of systematic falsehood—of ruthless, but secret violence: a policy which actuated the fell statecraft of Louis XI., which darkened, whenever he paused to think and to scheme, the gaudy and jovial character of Edward IV.; which appeared in its fullest combination of profound guile and resolute will in Richard III., and,—softened down into more plausible and specious purpose by the unimpassioned sagacity of Henry VII.—finally attained the object which justified all its villanies to the princes of its native land—namely, the tranquillity of a settled state, and the establishment of a civilised but imperious despotism.

Again, in that twilight time, upon which was dawning the great Invention that gave to Letters and to Science the precision and durability of the printed page; it is interesting to conjecture what would have been the fate of any scientific achievement for which the world was less prepared. The reception of print-

* For it is noticeable that in nearly all the popular risings—that of Cade, of Robin of Redesdale, and afterwards of that which Perkin Warbeck made subservient to his extraordinary enterprise, the proclamations of the rebels always announced, among their popular grievances, the depression of the ancient nobles and the elevation of new men.

ing into England, chanced just at the happy period when Scholarship and Literature were favoured by the great. The princes of York, with the exception of Edward IV. himself, who had, however, the grace to lament his own want of learning, and the taste to appreciate it in others, were highly educated. The Lords Rivers and Hastings* were accomplished in all the "witte and lere" of their age. Princes and peers vied with each other in their patronage of Caxton, and Richard III., during his brief reign, spared no pains to circulate to the utmost the invention destined to transmit his own memory to the hatred and the horror of all succeeding time. But when we look around us, we see, in contrast to the gracious and fostering reception of the mere mechanism by which science is made manifest, the utmost intolerance to science itself. The mathematics in especial are deemed the very cabala of the black art—accusations of witchcraft were never more abundant, and yet, strange to say, those who openly professed to practise the unhallowed science,† and contrived to make their deceptions profitable to some unworthy political purpose, appear to have enjoyed safety, and sometimes even honour, while those who, occupied with some practical, useful, and noble pursuits, uncomprehended by prince or people, denied their sorcery, were despatched without mercy. The Mathematician and Astronomer, Bolinbroke (the greatest clerk of his age), is hanged and quartered as a wizard, while not only impunity but reverence seems to have awaited a certain Friar Bungey, for having raised mists and vapours, which greatly befriended Edward IV. at the battle of Barnet.

Our knowledge of the intellectual spirt of the age,

*The erudite Lord Worcester had been one of Caxton's warmest patrons, but that nobleman was no more, at the time in which Printing is said to have been actually introduced into England.

† Nigromancy or Sorcery even took its place amongst the regular callings. Thus, "Thomas Vandyke, late of Cambridge," is styled (Rolls Parl. 6. p. 273) Nigromancer, as his profession.—Sharon Turner, "History of England," vol. iv. p. 6. Bucke, "History of Richard III."

therefore, only becomes perfect when we contrast the success of the Impostor with the fate of the true Genius. And as the prejudices of the populace ran high against all mechanical contrivances for altering the settled conditions of labour,* so, probably, in the very instinct and destiny of Genius, which ever drive it to a war with popular prejudice, it would be towards such contrivances that a man of great ingenuity and intellect, if studying the physical sciences, would direct his ambition.

Whether the author, in the invention he has assigned to his philosopher (Adam Warner), has too boldly assumed the possibility of a conception so much in advance of the time, they who have examined such of the works of Roger Bacon as are yet given to the world, can best decide; but the assumption in itself belongs strictly to the most acknowledged prerogatives of Fiction; and the true and important question will obviously be, not whether Adam Warner could have constructed his model, but whether, having so constructed it, the fate that befell him was probable and natural.

Such characters as I have here alluded to, seemed, then, to me, in meditating the treatment of the high and brilliant subject which your eloquence animated me to attempt, the proper Representatives of the multiform Truths which the time of Warwick, the Kingmaker, affords to our interests and suggests for our instruction; and I can only wish that the powers of the author were worthier of the theme.

It is necessary that I now state briefly the foundation of the Historical portions of this narrative. The charming and popular History, of Hume, which, how-

* Even in the article of bonnets and hats, it appears that certain wicked Fulling Mills were deemed worthy of a special anathema in the reign of Edward IV. These engines are accused of having sought, "by subtle imagination," the destruction of the original makers of hats and bonnets, "by man's strength—that is, with hands and feet." And an act of parliament was passed (22nd of Edward IV.) to put down the fabrication of the said hats and bonnets by *Mechanical* contrivance.

ever, in its treatment of the reign of Edward IV. is more than ordinarily incorrect, has probably left upon the minds of many of my readers, who may not have directed their attention to more recent and accurate researches into that obscure period, an erroneous impression of the causes which led to the breach between Edward IV. and his great kinsman and subject, the Earl of Warwick. The general notion is probably still strong, that it was the marriage of the young king to Elizabeth Gray, during Warwick's negotiations in France for the alliance of Bona of Savoy (sister-in-law to Louis XI.), which exasperated the fiery earl, and induced his union with the House of Lancaster. All our more recent historians have justly rejected this groundless fable, which even Hume (his extreme penetration supplying the defects of his superficial research) admits with reserve.* A short summary of the reasons for this rejection is given by Dr. Lingard, and annexed below.† And, indeed, it is a matter of

* "There may even some doubt arise with regard to the proposal of marriage made to Bona of Savoy," &c.—Hume, note to p. 222, vol. iii. edit. 1825.

† "Many writers tell us that the enmity of Warwick arose from his disappointment, caused by Edward's clandestine marriage with Elizabeth. If we may believe them, the earl was at the very time in France negotiating on the part of the king a marriage with Bona of Savoy, sister to the Queen of France; and having succeeded in his mission, brought back with him the Count of Dampmartin as ambassador from Louis. To me the whole story appears a fiction. 1. It is not to be found in the more ancient historians. 2. Warwick was not at the time in France. On the 20th of April, ten days before the marriage, he was employed in negotiating a truce with the French envoys in London (Rym. xi. 521), and on the 26th of May, about three weeks after it, was appointed to treat of another truce with the King of Scots (Rym. xi. 424). 3. Nor could he bring Dampmartin with him to England. For that nobleman was committed a prisoner to the Bastile in September, 1463, and remained there till May, 1465. (Monstrel. iii. 97, 109.) Three contemporary and well-informed writers, the two continuators of the History of Croyland, and Wyrcester, attribute his discontent to the marriages and honours granted to the Wydeviles, and the marriage of the Princess Margaret with the Duke of Burgundy."—Lingard, vol. iii. c. 24, p. 5, 19, 4to edition.

wonder that so many of our chroniclers could have gravely admitted a legend contradicted by all the subsequent conduct of Warwick himself. For we find the earl specially doing honour to the publication of Edward's marriage, standing godfather to his first-born (the Princess Elizabeth), employed as ambassador, or acting as minister, and fighting *for* Edward, and *against* the Lancastrians during the five years that elapsed between the coronation of Elizabeth and Warwick's rebellion.

The real causes of this memorable quarrel, in which Warwick acquired his title of King-maker, appear to have been these.

It is probable enough, as Sharon Turner suggests,* that Warwick was disappointed that, since Edward chose a subject for his wife, he neglected the more suitable marriage he might have formed with the earl's eldest daughter: and it is impossible but that the earl should have greatly chafed in common with all his order, by the promotion of the queen's relations,† new men, and apostate Lancastrians. But it is clear that these causes for discontent never weakened his zeal for Edward till the year 1467, when we chance upon the true origin of the romance concerning Bona of Savoy, and the first open dissension between Edward and the earl.

In that year Warwick went to France, to conclude an alliance with Louis XI., and to secure the hand of one of the French princes ‡ for Margaret, sister to Edward IV.; during this period, Edward received the bastard brother of Charles, Count of Charolois, afterwards Duke of Burgundy, and arranged a marriage between Margaret and the count.

* Sharon Turner, "History of England," vol. iii. p. 269.

† W. Wyr. 506, 7. Croyl. 542.

‡ Which of the princes this was does not appear, and can scarcely be conjectured. The "Pictorial History of England" (Book v. 102), in a tone of easy decision, says "it was one of the sons of Louis XI." But Louis had no living sons at all at the time. The Dauphin was not born till three years afterwards. The most probable person was the Duke of Guienne, Louis's brother.

Warwick's embassy was thus dishonoured, and the dishonour was aggravated by personal enmity to the bridegroom Edward had preferred.* The earl retired in disgust to his castle. But Warwick's nature, which Hume has happily described as one of "undesigning frankness and openness," † does not seem to have long harboured this resentment. By the intercession of the Archbishop of York and others, a reconciliation was effected, and the next year, 1468, we find Warwick again in favour, and even so far forgetting his own former cause of complaint as to accompany the procession in honour of Margaret's nuptials with his private foe.‡ In the following year, however, arose the second dissension between the king and his minister—viz., in the king's refusal to sanction the marriage of his brother Clarence with the earl's daughter Isabel, a refusal which was attended with a resolute opposition that must greatly have galled the pride of the earl, since Edward even went so far as § to solicit the pope to refuse his sanction, on the ground of relationship. The pope, nevertheless, grants the dispensation, and the marriage takes place at Calais. A popular rebellion then breaks out in England. Some of Warwick's kinsmen—those, however, belonging to the branch of the Nevile family that had always been Lancastrians, and at variance with the earl's party—are found at its head. The king, who

* The Croyland Historian, who, as far as his brief and meagre record extends, is the best authority for the time of Edward IV., very decidedly states the Burgundian alliance to be the original cause of Warwick's displeasure, rather than the king's marriage with Elizabeth:—"Upon which (the marriage of Margaret with Charolois), Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick, who had for so many years taken party with the French against the Burgundians, conceived great indignation; and I hold this to be the truer cause of his resentment, than the king's marriage with Elizabeth, for he had rather have procured a husband for the aforesaid Princess Margaret in the kingdom of France." The Croyland Historian also speaks emphatically of the strong animosity existing between Charolois and Warwick. —Cont. Croyl. 551.

† Hume, "Henry VI.," vol. iii. p. 172, edit. 1825.

‡ Lingard. § Carte. Wm. Wyre.

is in imminent danger, writes a supplicating letter to Warwick to come to his aid.* The earl again forgets former causes for resentment, hastens from Calais, rescues the king, and quells the rebellion by the influence of his popular name.

We next find Edward at Warwick's castle of Middleham, where, according to some historians, he is forcibly detained, an assertion treated by others as a contemptible invention; but, whatever the true construction of the story, we find that Warwick and the king are still on such friendly terms, that the earl marches in person against a rebellion on the borders —obtains a signal victory—and that the rebel leader (the earl's own kinsman) is beheaded by Edward at York. We find that, immediately after this supposed detention, Edward speaks of Warwick and his brothers "as his best friends"†—that he betroths his eldest daughter to Warwick's nephew, the male heir of the family. And then suddenly, only three months afterwards (in Feb. 1470), and without any clear and apparent cause, we find Warwick in open rebellion, animated by a deadly hatred to the king, refusing, from first to last, all overtures of conciliation; and so determined is his vengeance, that he bows a pride, hitherto morbidly susceptible, to the vehement inso-

* "Paston Letters," cxcviii. vol. ii., Knight's edition. See Lingard, c. 24, for the true date of Edward's letters to Warwick, Clarence, and the Archbishop of York.

† "Paston Letters," cciv. vol. ii., Knight's edition. The date of this letter, which puzzled the worthy annotator, is clearly to be referred to Edward's return from York, after his visit to Middleham in 1469. No mention is therein made by the gossiping contemporary of any rumour that Edward had suffered imprisonment. He enters the city in state, as having returned safe and victorious from a formidable rebellion. The letter goes on to say—"The king himself hath [that is, *holds*] good language of the Lords Clarence, of Warwick, &c., saying, 'they be his best friends.'" Would he say this if just escaped from a prison? Sir John Paston, the writer of the letter, adds, it is true, "But his household men have [hold] other language." Very probably, for the household men were the court creatures always at variance with Warwick, and held, no doubt, the same language they had been in the habit of holding before.

lence of Margaret of Anjou, and forms the closest alliance with the Lancastrian party, in the destruction of which his whole life had previously been employed.

Here, then, where History leaves us in the dark —where our curiosity is the most excited, Fiction gropes amidst the ancient chronicles, and seeks to detect and to guess the truth. And then, Fiction, accustomed to deal with the human heart, seizes upon the paramount importance of a Fact which the modern historian has been contented to place amongst dubious and collateral causes of dissension. We find it broadly and strongly stated, by Hall and others, that Edward had coarsely attempted the virtue of one of the earl's female relations. "And farther it erreth not from the truth," says Hall, "that the king did attempt a thing once in the earl's house, which was much against the earl's honesty;—but whether it was the daughter or the niece," adds the chronicler, "was not, for both their honours, openly known; but *surely* such a thing was attempted by King Edward," &c.

Any one at all familiar with Hall (and, indeed, with all our principal chroniclers, except Fabyan) will not expect any accurate precision as to the date he assigns for the outrage. He awards to it, therefore, the same date he erroneously gives to Warwick's other grudges (viz. a period brought some years lower by all judicious historians),—a date at which Warwick was still Edward's fastest friend.

Once grant the probability of this insult to the earl (the probability is conceded at once by the more recent historians, and received without scruple as a fact by Rapin, Habington, and Carte), and the whole obscurity which involves this memorable quarrel vanishes at once. Here was, indeed, a wrong never to be forgiven, and yet never to be proclaimed. As Hall implies, the honour of the earl was implicated in hushing the scandal, and the honour of Edward in concealing the offence.—That, if ever the insult were attempted, it must have been *just* previous to the earl's declared hostility, is clear. Offences of that kind hurry men to

immediate action at the first, or else, if they stoop to dissimulation, the more effectually to avenge afterwards, the outbreak bides its seasonable time. But the time selected by the earl for *his* outbreak was the very worst he could have chosen, and attests the influence of a sudden passion—a new and uncalculated cause of resentment. He had no forces collected—he had not even sounded his own brother-in-law, Lord Stanley (since he was uncertain of his intentions), while, but a few months before, had he felt any desire to dethrone the king, he could either have suffered him to be crushed by the popular rebellion the earl himself had quelled, or have disposed of his person as he pleased when a guest at his own castle of Middleham. His evident want of all preparation and forethought—a want which drove into rapid and compulsory flight from England the baron to whose banner, a few months afterwards, flocked sixty thousand men —proves that the cause of his alienation was fresh and recent.

If, then, the cause we have referred to, as mentioned by Hall and others, seems the most probable we can find (*no other* cause for such *abrupt* hostility being discernible), the date for it must be placed where it is in this work—viz., just prior to the earl's revolt. The next question is, who could have been the lady thus offended, whether a niece or daughter; scarcely a niece. For Warwick had one married brother, Lord Montagu, and several sisters; but the sisters were married to lords who remained friendly to Edward,* and Montagu seems to have had no daughter out of childhood,† while that nobleman himself did not share

* Except the sisters married to Lord Fitzhugh and Lord Oxford. But though Fitzhugh, or rather his son, broke into rebellion, it was for some cause in which Warwick did not sympathise, for by Warwick himself was that rebellion put down; nor could the aggrieved lady have been a daughter of Lord Oxford's, for he was a stanch, though not avowed, Lancastrian, and seems to have carefully kept aloof from the court.

† Montagu's wife could have been little more than thirty at the time of his death. She married again, and had a family by her second husband.

Warwick's rebellion at the first, but continued to enjoy the confidence of Edward. We cannot reasonably, then, conceive the uncle to have been so much more revengeful than the parents—the legitimate guardians of the honour of a daughter. It is, therefore, more probable that the insulted maiden should have been one of Lord Warwick's daughters, and this is the general belief. Carte plainly declares it was Isabel. But Isabel it could hardly have been; she was then married to Edward's brother, the Duke of Clarence, and within a month of her confinement. The earl had only one other daughter, Anne, then in the flower of her youth; and though Isabel appears to have possessed a more striking character of beauty, Anne must have had no inconsiderable charms to have won the love of the Lancastrian Prince Edward, and to have inspired a tender and human affection in Richard Duke of Gloucester.* It is also noticeable, that when, not as

* Not only does Majerus, the Flemish annalist, speak of Richard's early affection to Anne, but Richard's pertinacity in marrying her, at a time when her family was crushed and fallen, seems to sanction the assertion. True, that Richard received her with a considerable portion of the estates of her parents. But both Anne herself and her parents were attainted, and the whole property at the disposal of the crown. Richard at that time had conferred the most important services on Edward. He had remained faithful to him during the rebellion of Clarence—he had been the hero of the day both at Barnet and Tewksbury. His reputation was then exceedingly high, and if he had demanded, as a legitimate reward, the lands of Middleham, without the bride, Edward could not well have refused them. He certainly had a much better claim than the only other competitor for the confiscated estates—viz., the perjured and despicable Clarence. For Anne's reluctance to marry Richard, and the disguise she assumed, see Miss Strickland's "Life of Anne of Warwick." For the honour of Anne, rather than of Richard, to whose memory, one crime more or less, matters but little, it may here be observed, that so far from there being any ground to suppose that Gloucester was an accomplice in the assassination of the young prince Edward of Lancaster, there is some ground to believe that that prince was not assassinated at all, but died (as we would fain hope the grandson of Henry V. did die) fighting manfully in the field.—"Harleian MSS.;" Stowe, "Chronicle of Tewksbury;" Sharon Turner, vol. iii. p. 335.

Shakspeare represents, but after long solicitation, and apparently by positive coercion, Anne formed her second marriage, she seems to have been kept carefully by Richard from his gay brother's court, and rarely, if ever, to have appeared in London till Edward was no more.

That considerable obscurity should always rest upon the facts connected with Edward's meditated crime—that they should never be published amongst the grievances of the haughty rebel, is natural from the very dignity of the parties, and the character of the offence—that in such obscurity, sober History should not venture too far on the hypothesis suggested by the chronicler, is right and laudable. But probably it will be conceded by all, that here Fiction finds its lawful province, and that it may reasonably help, by no improbable nor groundless conjecture, to render connected and clear the most broken and the darkest fragments of our annals.

I have judged it better partially to forestall the interest of the reader in my narrative, by stating thus openly what he may expect, than to encounter the far less favourable impression (if he had been hitherto a believer in the old romance of Bona of Savoy*), that the author was taking an unwarrantable liberty with the real facts, when, in truth, it is upon the real facts, as far as they can be ascertained, that the author has built his tale, and his boldest inventions are but deductions from the amplest evidence he could collect. Nay, he even ventures to believe, that whoever hereafter shall write the history of Edward IV. will not disdain to avail himself of some suggestions scattered throughout these volumes, and tending to throw new light upon the events of that intricate but important period.

* I say, the old romance of Bona of Savoy—so far as Edward's rejection of her hand for that of Elizabeth Gray, is stated to have made the cause of his quarrel with Warwick. But I do not deny the possibility that such a marriage had been contemplated and advised by Warwick, though he neither sought to negotiate it, nor was wronged by Edward's preference of his fair subject.

It is probable that this work will prove more popular in its nature than my last fiction of "Zanoni," which could only be relished by those interested in the examination of the various problems in human life which it attempts to solve. But both fictions, however different and distinct their treatment, are constructed on those principles of art to which, in all my later works, however imperfect my success, I have sought at least steadily to adhere.

To my mind, a writer should sit down to compose a fiction as a painter prepares to compose a picture. His first care should be the conception of a whole as lofty as his intellect can grasp—as harmonious and complete as his art can accomplish; his second care, the *character* of the interest which the details are intended to sustain.

It is when we compare works of imagination in writing, with works of imagination on the canvas, that we can best form a critical idea of the different schools which exist in each; for common both to the author and the painter are those styles which we call the Familiar, the Picturesque, and the Intellectual. By recurring to this comparison we can, without much difficulty, classify works of Fiction in their proper order, and estimate the rank they should severally hold. The Intellectual will probably never be the most widely popular for the moment. He who prefers to study in this school must be prepared for much depreciation, for its greatest excellences, even if he achieve them, are not the most obvious to the many. In discussing, for instance, a modern work, we hear it praised, perhaps, for some striking passage, some prominent character; but when do we ever hear any comment on its harmony of construction, on its fulness of design, on its ideal character,—on its essentials, in short, as a work of art? What we hear most valued in the picture, we often find the most neglected in the book—viz., *the composition;* and this, simply, because in England painting is recognised as an art, and estimated according to definite theories. But in literature, we judge from a taste never formed—from a thousand

prejudices and ignorant predilections. We do not yet comprehend that the author is an artist, and that the true rules of art by which he should be tested are precise and immutable. Hence the singular and fantastic caprices of the popular opinion—its exaggerations of praise or censure—its passion and reaction. At one while, its solemn contempt for Wordsworth—at another, its absurd idolatry. At one while, we are stunned by the noisy celebrity of Byron—at another, we are calmly told that he can scarcely be called a poet. Each of these variations in the public is implicitly followed by the vulgar criticism; and as a few years back our journals vied with each other in ridiculing Wordsworth for the faults which he did not possess, they vie now with each other in eulogiums upon the merits which he has never displayed.

These violent fluctuations betray both a public and a criticism utterly unschooled in the elementary principles of literary art, and entitle the humblest author to dispute the censure of the hour, while they ought to render the greatest suspicious of its praise.

It is, then, in conformity, not with any presumptuous conviction of his own superiority, but with his common experience and common sense, that every author who addresses an English audience in serious earnest is permitted to feel that his final sentence rests not with the jury before which he is first heard. The literary history of the day consists of a series of judgments set aside.

But this uncertainty must more essentially betide every student, however lowly, in the school I have called the Intellectual, which must ever be more or less at variance with the popular canons; it is its hard necessity to vex and disturb the lazy quietude of vulgar taste, for unless it did so, it could neither elevate nor move. He who resigns the Dutch art for the Italian must continue through the dark to explore the principles upon which he founds his design—to which he adapts his execution: in hope or in despondence, still faithful to the theory which cares less for the amount of interest created than for the sources from which

the interest is to be drawn—seeking in action the movement of the grander passions, or the subtler springs of conduct—seeking in repose the colouring of intellectual beauty.

The Low and the High of Art are not very readily comprehended; they depend not upon the worldly degree or the physical condition of the characters delineated; they depend entirely upon the quality of the emotion which the characters are intended to excite—viz., whether of sympathy for something low, or of admiration for something high. There is nothing high in a boor's head by Teniers—there is nothing low in a boor's head by Guido. What makes the difference between the two?—The absence or presence of the Ideal! But every one can judge of the merit of the first—for it is of the Familiar school—it requires a connoisseur to see the merit of the last, for it is of the Intellectual.

I have the less scrupled to leave these remarks to cavil or to sarcasm, because this fiction is probably the last with which I shall trespass upon the Public, and I am desirous that it shall contain, at least, my avowal of the principles upon which it and its later predecessors have been composed: you know well, however others may dispute the fact, the earnestness with which those principles have been meditated and pursued,—with high desire, if but with poor results.

It is a pleasure to feel that the aim, which I value more than the success, is comprehended by one whose exquisite taste as a critic is only impaired by that far rarer quality—the disposition to *over*-estimate the person you *profess* to esteem! Adieu, my sincere and valued friend; and accept, as a mute token of gratitude and regard, these flowers gathered in the Garden where we have so often roved together.

E. L. B.

LONDON,
January, 1843.

PREFACE

TO THE LAST OF THE BARONS

This was the first attempt of the Author in Historical Romance upon English ground. Nor would he have risked the disadvantage of comparison with the genius of Sir Walter Scott, had he not believed that that great writer and his numerous imitators had left altogether unoccupied the peculiar field in Historical Romance which the Author has here sought to bring into cultivation. In "The Last of the Barons," as in "Harold," the aim has been to illustrate the actual history of the period; and to bring into fuller display than general History itself has done, the characters of the principal personages of the time,—the motives by which they were probably actuated—the state of parties,—the condition of the people,—and the great social interests which were involved in what, regarded imperfectly, appear but the feuds of rival factions.

"The Last of the Barons" has been by many esteemed the best of the Author's romances; and perhaps in the portraiture of actual character, and the grouping of the various interests and agencies of the time, it may have produced effects which render it more vigorous and life-like than any of the other attempts in romance by the same hand.

It will be observed that the purely imaginary characters introduced are very few; and, however prominent they may appear, still, in order not to interfere with the genuine passions and events of history, they are represented as the passive sufferers, not the active agents, of the real events. Of these imaginary char-

acters, the most successful is Adam Warner, the philosopher in advance of his age; indeed, as an ideal portrait, I look upon it as the most original in conception, and the most finished in execution, of any to be found in my numerous prose works, "Zanoni" alone excepted.

For the rest, I venture to think that the general reader will obtain from these pages a better notion of the important age, characterised by the decline of the feudal system, and immediately preceding that great change in society which we usually date from the accession of Henry VII., than he could otherwise gather without wading through a vast mass of neglected chronicles and antiquarian dissertations.

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THE LAST OF THE BARONS

BOOK I

THE ADVENTURES OF MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE

CHAPTER I

THE PASTIME-GROUND OF OLD COCKAIGNE

Westward, beyond the still pleasant, but, even then, no longer solitary, hamlet of Charing, a broad space, broken here and there by scattered houses and venerable pollards, in the early spring of 1467, presented the rural scene for the sports and pastimes of the inhabitants of Westminster and London. Scarcely need we say that open spaces for the popular games and diversions were then numerous in the suburbs of the metropolis. Grateful to some, the fresh pools of Islington; to others, the grass-bare fields of Finsbury; to all, the edgeless plains of vast Mile-end. But the site to which we are now summoned was a new and maiden holiday-ground, lately bestowed upon the townsfolk of Westminster by the powerful Earl of Warwick.

Raised by a verdant slope above the low marsh-grown soil of Westminster, the ground communicated to the left with the Brook-fields, through which stole the peaceful Ty-bourne, and commanded pros-

pects, on all sides fair, and on each side varied. Behind, rose the twin green hills of Hampstead and Highgate, with the upland park and chase of Marybone—its stately manor-house half hid in woods. In front might be seen the Convent of the Lepers, dedicated to St. James—now a palace; then, to the left, York House,* now Whitehall; farther on, the spires of Westminster Abbey and the gloomy tower of the Sanctuary; next, the Palace, with its bulwark and vawmure, soaring from the river; while, eastward, and nearer to the scene, stretched the long bush-grown passage of the Strand, picturesquely varied with bridges, and flanked to the right by the embattled halls of feudal nobles, or the inns of the no less powerful prelates,—while sombre and huge, amidst hall and inn, loomed the gigantic ruins of the Savoy, demolished in the insurrection of Wat Tyler. Farther on, and farther yet, the eye wandered over tower, and gate, and arch, and spire with frequent glimpses of the broad sunlit river, and the opposite shore crowned by the palace of Lambeth, and the church of St. Mary Overies, till the indistinct cluster of battlements around the Fortress-Palatine bounded the curious gaze. As whatever is new is for a while popular, so to this pastime-ground, on the day we treat of, flocked, not only the idlers of Westminster, but the lordly dwellers of Ludgate and the Flete, and the wealthy citizens of tumultuous Chepe.

The ground was well suited to the purpose to which it was devoted. About the outskirts, indeed, there were swamps and fish-pools; but a considerable plot towards the centre presented a level sward, already worn bare and brown by the feet of the multitude.

* The residence of the Archbishops of York.

From this, towards the left, extended alleys, some recently planted, intended to afford, in summer, cool and shady places for the favourite game of bowls; while scattered clumps, chiefly of old pollards, to the right, broke the space agreeably enough into detached portions, each of which afforded its separate pastime or diversion. Around were ranged many carts, or waggons—horses of all sorts and value were led to and fro, while their owners were at sport. Tents, awnings, hostelries—temporary buildings—stages for showmen and jugglers—abounded, and gave the scene the appearance of a fair. But what particularly now demands our attention was a broad plot in the ground, dedicated to the noble diversion of archery. The reigning house of York owed much of its military success to the superiority of the bowmen under its banners, and the Londoners themselves were jealous of their reputation in this martial accomplishment. For the last fifty years, notwithstanding the warlike nature of the times, the practice of the bow, in the intervals of peace, had been more neglected than seemed wise to the rulers. Both the king and his loyal city had of late taken much pains to enforce the due exercise of "Goddes instrumente,"* upon which an edict had declared that "the liberties and honour of England principally rested!"

And numerous now was the attendance, not only of the citizens, the burghers, and the idle populace, but of the gallant nobles who surrounded the court of Edward IV., then in the prime of his youth; the handsomest, the gayest, and the bravest prince in Christendom.

* So called emphatically by Bishop Latimer, in his celebrated Sixth Sermon.

The royal tournaments (which were, however, waning from their ancient lustre to kindle afresh, and to expire in the reigns of the succeeding Tudors), restricted to the amusements of knight and noble, no doubt presented more of pomp and splendour than the motley and mixed assembly of all ranks that now grouped around the competitors for the silver arrow, or listened to the itinerant jongleur, dissour, or minstrel;—or, seated under the stunted shade of the old trees, indulged with eager looks, and hands often wandering to their dagger-hilts, in the absorbing passion of the dice; but no later and earlier scenes of revelry ever, perhaps, exhibited that heartiness of enjoyment, that universal holiday, which attended this mixture of every class, that established a rude equality for the hour—between the knight and the retainer, the burgess and the courtier.

The revolution that placed Edward IV. upon the throne had, in fact, been a popular one. Not only had the valour and moderation of his father, Richard, Duke of York, bequeathed a heritage of affection to his brave and accomplished son—not only were the most beloved of the great barons the leaders of his party—but the king himself, partly from inclination, partly from policy, spared no pains to win the good graces of that slowly rising, but even then important part of the population—the Middle Class. He was the first king who descended, without loss of dignity and respect, from the society of his peers and princes, to join familiarly in the feasts and diversions of the merchant and the trader. The lord mayor and council of London were admitted, on more than one solemn occasion, into the deliberations of the court; and Edward had not long since, on the coronation of his

queen, much to the discontent of certain of his barons, conferred the knighthood of the Bath upon four of the citizens. On the other hand, though Edward's gallantries—the only vice which tended to diminish his popularity with the sober burgesses—were little worthy of his station, his frank, joyous familiarity with his inferiors, was not debased by the buffooneries that had led to the reverses and the awful fate of two of his royal predecessors. There must have been a popular principle, indeed, as well as a popular fancy, involved in the steady and ardent adherence which the population of London, in particular, and most of the great cities, exhibited to the person and the cause of Edward IV. There was a feeling that his reign was an advance, in civilization, upon the monastic virtues of Henry VI., and the stern ferocity which accompanied the great qualities of "The Foreign Woman," as the people styled and regarded Henry's consort, Margaret of Anjou. While thus the gifts, the courtesy, and the policy of the young sovereign made him popular with the middle classes, he owed the allegiance of the more powerful barons and the favour of the rural population to a man who stood colossal amidst the iron images of the Age—the greatest and the last of the old Norman chivalry—kinglier in pride, in state, in possessions, and in renown, than the king himself—Richard Nevile, Earl of Salisbury and Warwick.

This princely personage, in the full vigour of his age, possessed all the attributes that endear the noble to the commons. His valour in the field was accompanied with a generosity rare in the captains of the time. He valued himself on sharing the perils and the hardships of his meanest soldier. His haughtiness to

the great was not incompatible with frank affability to the lowly. His wealth was enormous, but it was equalled by his magnificence, and rendered popular by his lavish hospitality. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have feasted daily at the open tables with which he allured to his countless castles the strong hands and grateful hearts of a martial and unsettled population. More haughty than ambitious, he was feared because he avenged all affront; and yet not envied, because he seemed above all favour.

The holiday on the Archery-ground was more than usually gay, for the rumour had spread from the court to the city that Edward was about to increase his power abroad, and to repair what he had lost in the eyes of Europe, through his marriage with Elizabeth Gray—by allying his sister Margaret with the brother of Louis XI., and that no less a person than the Earl of Warwick had been the day before selected as ambassador on the important occasion.

Various opinions were entertained upon the preference given to France in this alliance, over the rival candidate for the hand of the princess—viz., the Count de Charolois, afterwards Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.

"By'r Lady," said a stout citizen about the age of fifty, "but I am not over pleased with this French marriage-making! I would liefer the stout earl were going to France with bows and bills, than sarcenets and satins. What will become of our trade with Flanders—answer me that, Master Stokton? The house of York is a good house, and the king is a good king, but trade is trade. Every man must draw water to his own mill."

"Hush, Master Heyford!" said a small lean man

in a light-grey surcoat. "The king loves not talk about what the king does. 'Tis ill jesting with lions. Remember William Walker hanged for saying his son should be heir to the Crown."

"Troth," answered Master Heyford, nothing daunted, for he belonged to one of the most powerful corporations of London—"it was but a scurvy Pepperer* who made that joke. But a joke from a worshipful goldsmith, who has moneys and influence, and a fair wife of his own, whom the king himself has been pleased to commend, is another guess sort of matter. But here is my grave-visaged headman, who always contrives to pick up the last gossip astir, and has a deep eye into mill-stones. Why, ho, there! Alwyn—I say, Nicholas Alwyn!—who would have thought to see thee with that bow, a good half-ell taller than thyself? Methought thou wert too sober and studious for such man-at-arms sort of devilry."

"An' it please you, Master Heyford," answered the person thus addressed—a young man, pale and lean, though sinewy and large-boned, with a countenance of great intelligence, but a slow and somewhat formal manner of speech, and a strong provincial accent—"An' it please you, King Edward's edict ordains every Englishman to have a bow of his own height; and he who neglects the shaft on a holiday, forfeiteth one halfpenny and some honour. For the rest, methinks that the citizens of London will become of more worth and potency every year; and it shall not be my fault if I do not, though but a humble headman to your worshipful mastership, help to make them so."

"Why, that's well said, lad; but if the Londoners

* Old name for Grocer.

prosper, it is because they have nobles in their gipsires,* not bows in their hands."

"Thinkest thou, then, Master Heyford, that any king at a pinch would leave them the gipsire, if they could not protect it with the bow? That Age may have gold, let not Youth despise iron."

"Body o' me!" cried Master Heyford, "but thou hadst better curb in thy tongue. Though I have my jest—as a rich man and a corpulent—a lad who has his way to make good should be silent and—but he's gone."

"Where hooked you up that young jack-fish?" said Master Stokton, the thin mercer, who had reminded the goldsmith of the fate of the grocer.

"Why, he was meant for the cowl, but his mother, a widow, at his own wish, let him make choice of the flat cap. He was the best 'prentice ever I had. By the blood of St. Thomas, he will push his way in good time; he has a head, Master Stokton—a head—and an ear; and a great big pair of eyes always looking out for something to his proper advantage."

In the meanwhile, the goldsmith's headman had walked leisurely up to the Archery-ground; and even in his gait and walk, as he thus repaired to a pastime, there was something steady, staid, and business-like.

The youths of his class and calling were at that day very different from their equals in this. Many of them the sons of provincial retainers, some even of franklins and gentlemen, their childhood had made them familiar with the splendour and the sports of knighthood; they had learned to wrestle, to cudgel, to pitch the bar or the quoit, to draw the bow, and to

* Gipsire, a kind of pouch worn at the girdle.

practise the sword and buckler, before transplanted from the village green to the city stall. And, even then, the constant broils and wars of the time—the example of their betters—the holiday spectacle of mimic strife—and, above all, the powerful and corporate association they formed among themselves—tended to make them as wild, as jovial, and as dissolute a set of young fellows as their posterity are now sober, careful, and discreet. And as Nicholas Alwyn, with a slight inclination of his head, passed by, two or three loud, swaggering, bold-looking groups of apprentices—their shaggy hair streaming over their shoulders—their caps on one side—their short cloaks of blue, torn or patched, though still passably new—their bludgeons under their arms—and their whole appearance and manner not very dissimilar from the German collegians in the last century—notably contrasted Alwyn's prim dress, his precise walk, and the feline care with which he stepped aside from any patches of mire that might sully the soles of his square-toed shoes.

The idle apprentices winked and whispered, and lolled out their tongues at him as he passed. "Oh! but that must be as good as a May-Fair day—sober Nick Alwyn's maiden flight of the shaft. Hollo, puissant archer, take care of the goslings yonder! Look this way when thou pull'st, and then woe to the other side!" Venting these and many similar specimens of the humour of Cockaigne, the apprentices, however, followed their quondam colleague, and elbowed their way into the crowd gathered around the competitors at the butts; and it was at this spot, commanding a view of the whole space, that the spectator might well have formed some notion of the vast fol-

lowing of the house of Nevile. For everywhere along the front lines—everywhere in the scattered groups—might be seen, glistening in the sunlight, the armorial badges of that mighty family. The Pied Bull, which was the proper cognizance* of the Neviles, was principally borne by the numerous kinsmen of Earl Warwick, who rejoiced in the Nevile name. The Lord Montagu, Warwick's brother, to whom the king had granted the forfeit title and estates of the earls of Northumberland, distinguished his own retainers, however, by the special crest of the ancient Montagus —a Gryphon issuant from a ducal crown. But far more numerous than Bull or Gryphon (numerous as either seemed) were the badges borne by those who ranked themselves among the peculiar followers of the great Earl of Warwick:—The cognizance of the Bear and Ragged Staff, which he assumed in right of the Beauchamps, whom he represented through his wife, the heiress of the lords of Warwick, was worn in the hats of the more gentle and well-born clansmen and followers, while the Ragged Staff alone was worked front and back on the scarlet jackets of his more humble and personal retainers. It was a matter of popular notice and admiration, that in those who wore these badges, as in the wearers of the hat and staff of the ancient Spartans, might be traced a grave loftiness of bearing, as if they belonged to another caste —another race, than the herd of men. Near the place where the rivals for the silver arrow were collected, a lordly party had reined in their palfreys, and conversed with each other, as the judges of the field were marshalling the competitors.

* The Pied Bull the cognizance—the Dun Bull's head the crest.

"Who," said one of these gallants, "who is that comely young fellow just below us, with the Nevile cognizance of the Bull on his hat? He has the air of one I should know."

"I never saw him before, my Lord of Northumberland," answered one of the gentlemen thus addressed, "but, pardieu, he who knows all the Neviles by eye, must know half England." The Lord Montagu, for though at that moment invested with the titles of the Percy, by that name Earl Warwick's brother is known to history, and by that, his rightful name, he shall therefore be designated in these pages; —the Lord Montagu smiled graciously at this remark, and a murmur through the crowd announced that the competition for the silver arrow was about to commence. The butts, formed of turf, with a small white mark fastened to the centre by a very minute peg, were placed apart, one at each end, at the distance of eleven score yards. At the extremity, where the shooting commenced, the crowd assembled, taking care to keep clear from the opposite butt, as the warning word of "Fast" was thundered forth; but eager was the general murmur, and many were the wagers given and accepted, as some well-known archer tried his chance. Near the butt, that now formed the target, stood the marker with his white wand; and the rapidity with which archer after archer discharged his shaft, and then, if it missed, hurried across the ground to pick it up (for arrows were dear enough not to be lightly lost), amidst the jeers and laughter of the bystanders, was highly animating and diverting. As yet, however, no marksman had hit the white, though many had gone close to it, when Nicholas Alwyn stepped forward; and there was

something so unwarlike in his whole air, so prim in his gait, so careful in his deliberate survey of the shaft, and his precise adjustment of the leathern gauntlet that protected the arm from the painful twang of the string, that a general burst of laughter from the by-standers attested their anticipation of a signal failure.

"'Fore heaven!" said Montagu, "he handles his bow an' it were a yard measure. One would think he were about to bargain for the bow-string, he eyes it so closely."

"And now," said Nicholas, slowly adjusting the arrow, "a shot for the honour of old Westmoreland!" And as he spoke, the arrow sprang gallantly forth, and quivered in the very heart of the white. There was a general movement of surprise among the spectators, as the marker thrice shook his wand over his head. But Alwyn, as indifferent to their respect as he had been to their ridicule, turned round and said, with a significant glance at the silent nobles, "We springals of London can take care of our own, if need be."

"These fellows wax insolent. Our good king spoils them," said Montagu, with a curl of his lip. "I wish some young squire of gentle blood would not disdain a shot for the Nevile against the craftsman. How say you, fair sir?" And, with a princely courtesy of mien and smile, Lord Montagu turned to the young man he had noticed, as wearing the cognizance of the First House in England. The bow was not the customary weapon of the well-born; but still, in youth, its exercise formed one of the accomplishments of the future knight, and even princes did not disdain, on a popular holiday, to match a shaft

against the yeoman's cloth-yard.* The young man thus addressed, and whose honest, open, handsome, hardy face augured a frank and fearless nature, bowed his head in silence, and then slowly advancing to the umpires, craved permission to essay his skill, and to borrow the loan of a shaft and bow. Leave given and the weapons lent—as the young gentleman took his stand, his comely person, his dress, of a better quality than that of the competitors hitherto, and, above all, the Nevile badge worked in silver on his hat, diverted the general attention from Nicholas Alwyn. A mob is usually inclined to aristocratic predilections, and a murmur of goodwill and expectation greeted him, when he put aside the gauntlet offered to him, and said, "In my youth I was taught so to brace the bow that the string should not touch the arm: and though eleven score yards be but a boy's distance, a good archer will lay his body into his bow† as much as if he were to hit the *blanc* four hundred yards away."

"A tall fellow this!" said Montagu; "and one, I wot, from the North," as the young gallant fitted the shaft to the bow. And graceful and artistic was the attitude he assumed, the head slightly inclined, the feet firmly planted, the left a little in advance, and the stretched sinews of the bow-hand alone evincing that into that grasp was pressed the whole strength

* At a later period, Henry VIII. was a match for the best bowman in his kingdom. His accomplishment was hereditary, and distinguished alike his wise father and his pious son.

† "My father taught me to lay my body in my bow," &c., said Latimer, in his well-known sermon before Edward VI.—1549. The Bishop also herein observes, that "it is best to give the bow so much bending that the string need never touch the arm. This," he adds, "is practised by many good archers with whom I am acquainted."

of the easy and careless frame. The public expectation was not disappointed—the youth performed the feat considered of all the most dexterous, his arrow disdaining the white mark, struck the small peg which fastened it to the butts, and which seemed literally invisible to the bystanders.

"Holy St. Dunstan! there's but one man who can beat me in that sort that I know of," muttered Nicholas, "and I little expected to see him take a bite out of his own hip." With that he approached his successful rival.

"Well, Master Marmaduke," said he, "it is many a year since you showed me that trick at your father, Sir Guy's—God rest him! But I scarce take it kind in you to beat your own countryman!"

"Beshrew me!" cried the youth, and his cheerful features brightened into hearty and cordial pleasure: "but if I see in thee, as it seems to me, my old friend and foster-brother, Nick Alwyn, this is the happiest hour I have known for many a day. But stand back and let me look at thee, man. Thou! thou a tame London trader! Ha! ha!—is it possible?"

"Hout, Master Marmaduke," answered Nicholas, "every crow thinks his own baird bonniest, as they say in the North. We will talk of this anon, an' thou wilt honour me. I suspect the archery is over now. Few will think to mend that shot."

And here, indeed, the umpires advanced, and their chief—an old mercer, who had once borne arms, and indeed been a volunteer at the battle of Touton—declared that the contest was over, "unless," he added, in the spirit of a lingering fellow-feeling with the Londoner, "this young fellow, whom I hope to see an alderman one of these days, will demand an-

other shot, for as yet there hath been but one prick each at the butts."

"Nay, master," returned Alwyn, "I have met with my betters—and, after all," he added, indifferently, "the silver arrow, though a pretty bauble enough, is over light in its weight."

"Worshipful sir," said the young Nevile, with equal generosity, "I cannot accept the prize for a mere trick of the craft—the *blanc* was already disposed of by Master Alwyn's arrow. Moreover, the contest was intended for the Londoners, and I am but an interloper — beholden to their courtesy for a practice of skill—and even the loan of a bow—wherefore the silver arrow be given to Nicholas Alwyn."

"That may not be, gentle sir," said the umpire, extending the prize. "Sith Alwyn vails of himself, it is thine, by might and by right."

The Lord Montagu had not been inattentive to this dialogue, and he now said, in a loud tone that silenced the crowd, "Young Badgeman, thy gallantry pleases me no less than thy skill. Take the arrow, for thou hast won it; but as thou seemest a new comer, it is right thou shouldst pay thy tax upon entry—this be my task. Come hither, I pray thee, good sir," and the nobleman graciously beckoned to the mercer; "be these five nobles the prize of whatever Londoner shall acquit himself best in the bold English combat of quarter-staff, and the prize be given in this young archer's name. Thy name, youth?"

"Marmaduke Nevile, good my lord."

Montagu smiled, and the umpire withdrew to make the announcement to the bystanders. The proclamation was received with a shout that traversed from

group to group, and line to line, more hearty from the love and honour attached to the name of Nevile, than even from a sense of the gracious generosity of Earl Warwick's brother. One man alone, a sturdy, well-knit fellow, in a franklin's Lincoln broadcloth, and with a hood half-drawn over his features, did not join the popular applause, "These Yorkists," he muttered, "know well how to fool the people."

Meanwhile, the young Nevile still stood by the gilded stirrup of the great noble who had thus honoured him, and contemplated him with that respect and interest which a youth's ambition ever feels for those who have won a name.

The Lord Montagu bore a very different character from his puissant brother. Though so skilful a captain, that he had never been known to lose a battle, his fame as a warrior was, strange to say, below that of the great earl, whose prodigious strength had accomplished those personal feats that dazzled the populace, and revived the legendary renown of the earlier Norman knighthood. The caution and wariness indeed which Montagu displayed in battle, probably caused his success as a general, and the injustice done to him (at least by the vulgar) as a soldier. Rarely had Lord Montagu, though his courage was indisputable, been known to mix personally in the affray. Like the captains of modern times, he contented himself with directing the manœuvres of his men, and hence preserved that inestimable advantage of coolness and calculation, which was not always characteristic of the eager hardihood of his brother. The character of Montagu differed yet more from that of the earl in peace than in war. He was supposed to excel in all those supple arts of the courtier, which

Warwick neglected or despised; and if the last was, on great occasions, the adviser, the other, in ordinary life, was the companion of his sovereign. Warwick owed his popularity to his own large, open, daring, and lavish nature. The subtler Montagu sought to win, by care and pains, what the other obtained without an effort. He attended the various holiday meetings of the citizens, where Warwick was rarely seen. He was smooth-spoken and courteous to his equals, and generally affable, though with constraint, to his inferiors. He was a close observer, and not without that genius for intrigue, which in rude ages passes for the talent of a statesman. And yet in that thorough knowledge of the habits and tastes of the great mass, which gives wisdom to a ruler, he was far inferior to the earl. In common with his brother, he was gifted with the majesty of mien which imposes on the eye, and his port and countenance were such as became the prodigal expense of velvet, minever, gold, and jewels, by which the gorgeous magnates of the day communicated to their appearance the arrogant splendour of their power. "Young gentleman," said the earl, after eyeing with some attention the comely archer, "I am pleased that you bear the name of Nevile. Vouchsafe to inform me to what scion of our house we are this day indebted for the credit with which you have upborne its cognizance?"

"I fear," answered the youth, with a slight but not ungraceful hesitation, "that my lord of Montagu and Northumberland will hardly forgive the presumption with which I have intruded upon this assembly a name borne by nobles so illustrious, especially if it belong to those less fortunate branches of his family which have taken a different side from himself in the late

unhappy commotions. My father was Sir Guy Nevile, of Arsdale, in Westmoreland."

Lord Montagu's lip lost its gracious smile—he glanced quickly at the courtiers round him, and said gravely—"I grieve to hear it. Had I known this, certes my gipsire had still been five nobles the richer. It becomes not one fresh from the favour of King Edward IV. to show countenance to the son of a man, kinsman though he was, who bore arms for the usurpers of Lancaster. I pray thee, sir, to doff, henceforth, a badge dedicated only to the service of Royal York. No more, young man; we may not listen to the son of Sir Guy Nevile.——Sirs, shall we ride to see how the Londoners thrive at quarter-staff?"

With that, Montagu, deigning no farther regard at Nevile, wheeled his palfrey towards a distant part of the ground, to which the multitude was already pressing its turbulent and noisy way.

"Thou art hard on thy namesake, fair my lord," said a young noble, in whose dark-auburn hair, aquiline haughty features, spare but powerful frame, and inexpressible air of authority and command, were found all the attributes of the purest and eldest Norman race—the Patricians of the World.

"Dear Raoul de Fulke," returned Montagu, coldly, "when thou hast reached my age of thirty and four, thou wilt learn that no man's fortune casts so broad a shadow as to shelter from the storm the victims of a fallen cause."

"Not so would say thy bold brother," answered Raoul de Fulke, with a slight curl of his proud lip. "And I hold, with him, that no king is so sacred that we should render to his resentments our own kith and kin. God's wot, whosoever wears the badge, and

springs from the stem, of Raoul de Fulke, shall never find me question overmuch whether his father fought for York or Lancaster."

"Hush, rash babbler!" said Montagu, laughing gently; "what would King Edward say if this speech reached his ears? Our friend," added the courtier, turning to the rest, "in vain would bar the tide of change; and in this our New England, begirt with new men and new fashions, affect the feudal baronage of the worn-out Norman. But thou art a gallant knight, De Fulke, though a poor courtier."

"The saints keep me so," returned De Fulke. "From over-gluttony, from over wine-bibbing, from cringing to a king's leman, from quaking at a king's frown, from unbonneting to a greasy mob, from marrying an old crone for vile gold, may the saints ever keep Raoul de Fulke and his sons! Amen!"

This speech, in which every sentence struck its stinging satire into one or other of the listeners, was succeeded by an awkward silence, which Montagu was the first to break.

"Pardieu!" he said, "when did Lord Hastings leave us? and what fair face can have lured the truant?"

"He left us suddenly on the archery-ground," answered the young Lovell. "But as well might we track the breeze to the rose, as Lord William's sigh to maid or matron."

While thus conversed the cavaliers, and their plumes waved, and their mantles glittered along the broken ground, Marmaduke Nevile's eye pursued the horsemen with all that bitter feeling of wounded pride and impotent resentment with which Youth regards the first insult it receives from Power.

CHAPTER II

THE BROKEN GITTERN

Rousing himself from his indignant reverie, Marmaduke Nevile followed one of the smaller streams into which the crowd divided itself on dispersing from the archery-ground, and soon found himself in a part of the holiday scene appropriated to diversions less manly, but no less characteristic of the period than those of the staff and arrow. Beneath an awning, under which an itinerant landlord dispensed cakes and ale, the humorous Bourdour (the most vulgar degree of minstrel, or rather tale-teller) collected his clownish audience, while seated by themselves—apart, but within hearing—two harpers, in the king's livery, consoled each other for the popularity of their ribald rival, by wise reflections on the base nature of common folk. Farther on, Marmaduke started to behold what seemed to him the heads of giants at least six yards high; but on a nearer approach, these formidable apparitions resolved themselves to a company of dancers upon stilts. There, one *joculator*, exhibited the antics of his well-tutored ape—there, another eclipsed the attractions of the baboon by a marvellous horse, that beat a tabor with his fore feet—there the more sombre *Tregetour*, before a table raised upon a lofty stage, promised to cut off and refix the head of a sad-faced little boy, who, in the meantime was preparing his mortal frame for the operation by apparently larding himself with sharp knives and bodkins. Each of these wonder-dealers found his separate group of admirers, and great was the delight and

loud the laughter in the pastime-ground of old Cockaigne.

While Marmaduke, bewildered by this various bustle, stared around him, his eye was caught by a young maiden, in evident distress, struggling in vain to extricate herself from a troop of timbrel-girls, or *tymbesteres* (as they were popularly called), who surrounded her with mocking gestures, striking their instruments to drown her remonstrances, and dancing about her in a ring at every effort towards escape. The girl was modestly attired, as one of the humbler ranks, and her wimple in much concealed her countenance; but there was, despite her strange and undignified situation and evident alarm, a sort of quiet, earnest self-possession—an effort to hide her terror, and to appeal to the better and more womanly feelings of her persecutors. In the intervals of silence from their clamour, her voice, though low, clear, well-tuned, and impressive, forcibly arrested the attention of young Nevile; for at that day, even more than this (sufficiently apparent as it now is), there was a marked distinction in the intonation, the accent, the modulation of voice, between the better bred and better educated, and the inferior classes. But this difference, so ill according with her dress and position, only served to heighten more the bold insolence of the musical Bacchantes, who, indeed, in the eyes of the sober, formed the most immoral nuisance attendant on the sports of the time, and whose hardy license and peculiar sisterhood might tempt the antiquarian to search for their origin amongst the relics of ancient Paganism. And now, to increase the girl's distress, some half-score of dissolute apprentices and journeymen suddenly broke into the ring of the Mænads, and

were accosting her with yet more alarming insults, when Marmaduke, pushing them aside, strode to her assistance. "How now, ye lewd varlets!—ye make me blush for my countrymen in the face of day! Are these the sports of merry England—these your manly contests—to strive which can best affront a poor maid?—Out on ye, cullions and bezonians!—Cling to me, gentle donzel, and fear not. Whither shall I lead thee?"

The apprentices were not, however, so easily daunted. Two of them approached to the rescue, flourishing their bludgeons about their heads with formidable gestures—"Ho, ho!" cried one, "what right hast thou to step between the hunters and the doe? The young quean is too much honoured by a kiss from a bold 'prentice of London."

Marmaduke stepped back, and drew the small dagger which then formed the only habitual weapon of a gentleman.* This movement, discomposing his mantle, brought the silver arrow he had won (which was placed in his girdle) in full view of the assailants. At the same time they caught sight of the badge on his hat. These intimidated their ardour more than the drawn poniard.

"A Nevile!" said one, retreating. "And the jolly marksman who beat Nick Alwyn," said the other, lowering his bludgeon, and doffing his cap. "Gentle sir, forgive us, we knew not your quality. But as for the girl—your gallantry misleads you."

"The Wizard's daughter! ha! ha!—the Imp of Darkness!" screeched the timbrel-girls, tossing up their instruments, and catching them again on the points of their fingers. "She has enchanted him with

* Swords were not worn, in peace, at that period.

her glamour. Foul is fair! Foul fair thee, young springal, if thou go to the nets. Shadow and goblin to goblin and shadow! Flesh and blood to blood and flesh!"—and dancing round him, with wanton looks and bare arms, and gossamer robes that brushed him, as they circled, they chanted—

"Come, kiss me, my darling,
Warm kisses I trade for;
Wine, music, and kisses—
What else was life made for!"

With some difficulty, and with a disgust which was not altogether without a superstitious fear of the strange words and the outlandish appearance of these loathsome Delilahs, Marmaduke broke from the ring with his new charge; and in a few moments the Nevile and the maiden found themselves, unmolested and unpursued, in a deserted quarter of the ground; but still the scream of the timbrel-girls, as they hurried, wheeling and dancing, into the distance, was borne ominously to the young man's ear,—"Ha, ha! the witch and her lover! Foul is fair!—foul is fair! Shadow to goblin, goblin to shadow—and the Devil will have his own!"

"And what mischance, my poor girl," asked the Nevile soothingly, "brought thee into such evil company?"

"I know not, fair sir," said the girl, slowly recovering herself; "but my father is poor, and I had heard that on these holiday occasions one who had some slight skill on the gittern might win a few groats from the courtesy of the bystanders. So I stole out with my serving-woman, and had already got more than I dared hope, when those wicked timbrel-players came round me, and accused me of taking the money from

them. And then they called an officer of the ground, who asked me my name and holding; so when I answered, they called my father a wizard, and the man broke my poor gittern—see!"—and she held it up, with innocent sorrow in her eyes, yet a half-smile on her lips—"and they soon drove poor old Madge from my side, and I knew no more till you, worshipful sir, took pity on me."

"But why," asked the Nevile, "did they give to your father so unholy a name?"

"Alas, sir! he is a great scholar, who has spent his means in studying what he says will one day be of good to the people."

"Humph!" said Marmaduke, who had all the superstitions of his time, who looked upon a scholar, unless in the Church, with mingled awe and abhorrence, and who, therefore, was but ill-satisfied with the girl's artless answer,—

"Humph! your father—but"—checking what he was about, perhaps harshly, to say, as he caught the bright eyes and arch intelligent face lifted to his own —"but it is hard to punish the child for the father's errors."

"Errors, sir!" repeated the damsel, proudly, and with a slight disdain in her face and voice. "But yes, wisdom is ever, perhaps, the saddest error!"

This remark was of an order superior in intellect to those which had preceded it: it contrasted with the sternness of experience the simplicity of the child; and of such contrasts, indeed, was that character made up. For with a sweet, an infantine change of tone and countenance, she added, after a short pause—"They took the money!—the gittern,—see, they left that, when they had made it useless."

"I cannot mend the gittern, but I can refill the gipsire," said Marmaduke.

The girl coloured deeply. "Nay, sir, to earn is not to beg."

Marmaduke did not heed this answer, for as they were now passing by the stunted trees, under which sat several revellers, who looked up at him from their cups and tankards, some with sneering, some with grave looks, he began, more seriously than in his kindly impulse he had hitherto done, to consider the appearance it must have, to be thus seen walking, in public, with a girl of inferior degree, and perhaps doubtful repute. Even in our own day, such an exhibition would be, to say the least, suspicious, and in that day, when ranks and classes were divided with iron demarcations, a young gallant, whose dress bespoke him of gentle quality, with one of opposite sex, and belonging to the humbler orders, in broad day too, was far more open to censure. The blood mounted to his brow, and halting abruptly, he said, in a dry and altered voice—"My good damsel, you are now, I think, out of danger; it would ill beseem you, so young and so comely, to go further with one not old enough to be your protector, so, in God's name, depart quickly, and remember me when you buy your new gittern—poor child!" So saying, he attempted to place a piece of money in her hand. She put it back, and the coin fell on the ground.

"Nay, this is foolish," said he.

"Alas, sir!" said the girl gravely, "I see well that you are ashamed of your goodness. But my father begs not. And once—but that matters not."

"Once what?" persisted Marmaduke, interested in her manner, in spite of himself.

"Once," said the girl, drawing herself up, and with an expression that altered the whole character of her face—"the beggar ate at my father's gate. He is a born gentleman and a knight's son."

"And what reduced him thus?"

"I have said," answered the girl, simply, yet with the same half-scorn on her lip that it had before betrayed—"he is a scholar, and thought more of others than himself."

"I never saw any good come to a gentleman from those accursed books," said the Nevile; "fit only for monks and shavelings. But still, for your father's sake, though I am ashamed of the poorness of the gift——"

"No—God be with you, sir, and reward you." She stopped short, drew her wimple round her face, and was gone. Nevile felt an uncomfortable sensation of remorse and disapproval at having suffered her to quit him while there was yet any chance of molestation or annoyance, and his eye followed her till a group of trees veiled her from his view.

The young maiden slackened her pace as she found herself alone under the leafless boughs of the dreary pollards;—a desolate spot, made melancholy by dull swamps, half overgrown with rank verdure, through which forced its clogged way the shallow brook that now gives its name (though its waves are seen no more) to one of the main streets in the most polished quarters of the metropolis. Upon a mound formed by the gnarled roots of the dwarfed and gnome-like oak, she sat down and wept. In our earlier years, most of us may remember, that there was one day which made an epoch in life—the day that separated Childhood from Youth; for that day seems not to

come gradually, but to be a sudden crisis, an abrupt revelation. The buds of the heart open to close no more. Such a day was this in that girl's fate. But the day was not yet gone! That morning, when she dressed for her enterprise of filial love, perhaps for the first time Sybill Warner felt that she was fair—who shall say, whether some innocent, natural vanity had not blended with the deep, devoted earnestness, which saw no shame in the act by which the child could aid the father? Perhaps she might have smiled to listen to old Madge's praises of her winsome face—old Madge's predictions that the face and the gittern would not lack admirers on the gay ground. Perhaps some indistinct, vague forethoughts of the Future to which the sex will deem itself to be born, might have caused the cheek—no, not to blush, but to take a rosier hue, and the pulse to beat quicker, she knew not why. At all events, to that ground went the young Sibyll, cheerful, and almost happy, in her inexperience of actual life, and sure, at least, that youth and innocence sufficed to protect from insult. And now she sat down under the leafless tree to weep; and in those bitter tears, childhood itself was laved from her soul for ever.

"What ailest thou, maiden?" asked a deep voice; and she felt a hand laid lightly on her shoulder. She looked up in terror and confusion, but it was no form or face to inspire alarm that met her eye. It was a cavalier, holding by the rein a horse richly caparisoned, and though his dress was plainer and less exaggerated than that usually worn by men of rank, its materials were those which the sumptuary laws (constantly broken, indeed, as such laws ever must be) confined to nobles. Though his surcoat was but of

cloth, and the colour dark and sober, it was woven in foreign looms—an unpatriotic luxury, above the degree of knight—and edged deep with the costliest sables. The hilt of the dagger, suspended round his breast, was but of ivory, curiously wrought, but the scabbard was sown with large pearls. For the rest, the stranger was of ordinary stature, well knit, and active rather than powerful, and of that age (about thirty-five) which may be called the second prime of man. His face was far less handsome than Marmaduke Nevile's, but infinitely more expressive, both of intelligence and command, the features straight and sharp, the complexion clear and pale, and under the bright grey eyes a dark shade spoke either of dissipation or of thought.

"What ailest thou, maiden?—weepest thou some faithless lover? Tush! love renews itself in youth, as flower succeeds flower in spring."

Sibyll made no reply, she rose and moved a few paces, then arrested her steps and looked around her. She had lost all clue to her way homeward, and she saw with horror, in the distance, the hateful timbrel-girls, followed by the rabble, and weaving their strange dances towards the spot.

"Dost thou fear me, child? there is no cause," said the stranger, following her. "Again I say, 'What ailest thou?'"

This time his voice was that of command, and the poor girl involuntarily obeyed it. She related her misfortunes, her persecution by the *tymbesteres*, her escape—thanks to the Nevile's courtesy—her separation from her attendant, and her uncertainty as to the way she should pursue.

The nobleman listened with interest: he was a man

sated and wearied by pleasure and the world, and the evident innocence of Sibyll was a novelty to his experience, while the contrast between her language and her dress moved his curiosity. "And," said he, "thy protector left thee, his work half done;—fie on his chivalry! But I, donzel, wear the spurs of knighthood, and to succour the distressed is a duty my oath will not let me swerve from. I will guide thee home, for I know well all the purlieus of this evil den of London. Thou hast but to name the suburb in which thy father dwells."

Sibyll involuntarily raised her wimple, lifted her beautiful eyes to the stranger, in bewildered gratitude and surprise. Her childhood had passed in a court—her eye, accustomed to rank, at once perceived the high degree of the speaker! the contrast between this unexpected and delicate gallantry, and the condescending tone and abrupt desertion of Marmaduke, affected her again to tears.

"Ah, worshipful sir!" she said, falteringly, "what can reward thee for this unlooked-for goodness?"

"One innocent smile, sweet virgin!—for such I'll be sworn thou art."

He did not offer her his hand, but hanging the gold-enamelled rein over his arm, walked by her side; and a few words sufficing for his guidance, led her across the ground, through the very midst of the throng. He felt none of the young shame, the ingenuous scruples of Marmaduke, at the gaze he encountered, thus companioned. But Sibyll noted that ever and anon bonnet and cap were raised as they passed along, and the respectful murmur of the vulgar, who had so lately jeered her anguish, taught her the immeasurable distance in men's esteem, between

poverty shielded but by virtue, and poverty protected by power.

But suddenly a gaudy tinsel group broke through the crowd, and wheeling round their path, the foremost of them daringly approached the nobleman, and looking full into his disdainful face, exclaimed—"Tradest thou, too, for kisses? Ha! ha!—life is short—the witch is outwitched by thee! But witchcraft and death go together, as, peradventure, thou mayest learn at the last, sleek wooer." Then darting off, and heading her painted, tawdry throng, the timbrel-girl sprang into the crowd and vanished.

This incident produced no effect upon the strong and cynical intellect of the stranger. Without allusion to it, he continued to converse with his young companion, and artfully to draw out her own singular but energetic and gifted mind. He grew more than interested, he was both touched and surprised. His manner became yet more respectful, his voice more subdued and soft.

On what hazards turns our fate! On that day—a little and Sibyll's pure, but sensitive heart had, perhaps, been given to the young Nevile. He had defended and saved her; he was fairer than the stranger, he was more of her own years, and nearer to her in station; but in showing himself *ashamed* to be seen with her, he had galled her heart, and moved the bitter tears of her pride. What had the stranger done? Nothing, but reconciled the wounded delicacy to itself; and suddenly he became to her one ever to be remembered—wondered at—perhaps more. They reached an obscure suburb, and parted at the threshold of a large, gloomy, ruinous house, which Sibyll indicated as her father's home.

The girl lingered before the porch; and the stranger gazed, with the passionless admiration which some fair object of art produces on one who has refined his taste, but who has survived enthusiasm, upon the downcast cheek that blushed beneath his gaze—"Farewell!" he said; and the girl looked up wistfully. He might, without vanity, have supposed that look to imply what the lip did not dare to say—"And shall we meet no more?"

But he turned away, with formal though courteous salutation; and as he remounted his steed, and rode slowly towards the interior of the city, he muttered to himself, with a melancholy smile upon his lips—"Now might the grown infant make to himself a new toy; but an innocent heart is a brittle thing, and one false vow can break it. Pretty maiden. I like thee well eno' not to love thee. So, as my young Scotch minstrel sings and prays,

> "Christ keep these birdis bright in bowers,
> Sic peril lies in paramours!" *

We must now return to Marmaduke. On leaving Sibyll, and retracing his steps towards the more crowded quarter of the space, he was agreeably surprised by encountering Nicholas Alwyn, escorted in triumph by a legion of roaring apprentices from the victory he had just obtained over six competitors at the quarter-staff.

* A Scotch poet, in Lord Hailes's Collection, has the following lines in the very pretty poem called "Peril in Paramours:"—

> "Wherefore I pray, in termys short,
> Christ keep these birdis bright in bowers,
> Fra false lovers and their disport,
> Sic peril lies in paramours."

When the cortège came up to Marmaduke, Nicholas halted, and fronting his attendants, said, with the same cold and formal stiffness that had characterised him from the beginning—"I thank you, lads, for your kindness. It is your own triumph. All I cared for was to show that you London boys are able to keep up your credit in these days, when there's little luck in a yard-measure, if the same hand cannot bend a bow, or handle cold steel. But the less we think of the strife when we are in the stall, the better for our pouches. And so I hope we shall hear no more about it, until I get a ware of my own, when the more of ye that like to talk of such matters the better ye will be welcome,—always provided ye be civil customers,—who pay on the nail, for as the saw saith, 'Ell and tell makes the crypt swell.' For the rest, thanks are due to this brave gentleman, Marmaduke Nevile, who, though the son of a knight-banneret, who never furnished less to the battle-field than fifty men-at-arms, has condescended to take part and parcel in the sports of us peaceful London traders; and if ever you can do him a kind turn—for turn and turn is fair play—why you will, I answer for it. And so one cheer for old London, and another for Marmaduke Nevile. Here goes! Hurrah, my lads!" And with this pithy address Nicholas Alwyn took off his cap and gave the signal for the shouts, which, being duly performed, he bowed stiffly to his companions, who departed with a hearty laugh, and coming to the side of Nevile, the two walked on to a neighbouring booth, where, under a rude awning, and over a flagon of clary, they were soon immersed in the confidential communications each had to give and receive.

CHAPTER III

THE TRADER AND THE GENTLE; OR, THE CHANGING GENERATION

"No, my dear foster-brother," said the Nevile, "I do not yet comprehend the choice you have made. You were reared and brought up with such careful book-lere, not only to read and to write—the which, save the mark! I hold to be labour eno'—but chop Latin and logic and theology with St. Aristotle (is not that his hard name?) into the bargain, and all because you had an uncle of high note in Holy Church. I cannot say I would be a shaveling myself; but surely a monk with the hope of preferment, is a nobler calling to a lad of spirit and ambition than to stand out at a door and cry, 'Buy, buy'—'What d'ye lack'—to spend youth as a Flat-cap, and drone out manhood in measuring cloth, hammering metals, or weighing out spices?"

"Fair and softly, Master Marmaduke," said Alwyn, "you will understand me better anon. My uncle, the sub-prior, died—some say of austerities, others of ale—that matters not; he was a learned man and a cunning. 'Nephew Nicholas,' said he on his death-bed, 'think twice before you tie yourself up to the cloister; it's ill leaping now-a-days in a sackcloth bag. If a pious man be moved to the cowl by holy devotion, there is nothing to be said on the subject; but if he take to the Church as a calling, and wish to march ahead like his fellows, these times show him a prettier path to distinction. The nobles begin to get the best things for themselves; and a learned monk,

if he is the son of a yeoman, cannot hope, without a specialty of grace, to become abbot or bishop. The king, whoever he be, must be so drained by his wars, that he has little land or gold to bestow on his favourites; but his gentry turn an eye to the temporalities of the Church, and the Church and the king wish to strengthen themselves by the gentry. This is not all; there are free opinions afloat. The house of Lancaster has lost ground, by its persecutions and burnings. Men dare not openly resist, but they treasure up recollections of a fried grandfather, or a roasted cousin; recollections which have done much damage to the Henries, and will shake Holy Church itself one of these days. The Lollards lie hid, but Lollardism will never die. There is a new class rising amain, where a little learning goes a great way, if mixed with spirit and sense. Thou likest broad pieces, and a creditable name—go to London and be a trader. London begins to decide who shall wear the crown, and the traders to decide what king London shall befriend. Wherefore, cut thy trace from the cloister, and take thy road to the shop.' The next day my uncle gave up the ghost.—They had better clary than this at the convent, I must own. But every stone has its flaw."

"Yet," said Marmaduke, "if you took distaste to the cowl, from reasons that I pretend not to judge of, but which seem to my poor head very bad ones, seeing that the Church is as mighty as ever, and King Edward is no friend to the Lollards, and that your uncle himself was at least a sub-prior——"

"Had he been son to a baron, he had been a cardinal," interrupted Nicholas, "for his head was the longest that ever came out of the north country. But

go on; you would say my father was a sturdy yeoman, and I might have followed his calling?"

"You hit the mark, Master Nicholas."

"Hout,—man. I crave pardon of your rank Master Nevile. But a yeoman is born a yeoman, and he dies a yeoman—I think it better to die Lord Mayor of London; and so I craved my mother's blessing and leave, and a part of the old hyde has been sold to pay for the first step to the red gown, which I need not say must be that of the Flat cap. I have already taken my degrees, and no longer wear blue. I am headman to my master, and my master will be sheriff of London."

"It is a pity," said the Nevile, shaking his head; "you were ever a tall, brave lad, and would have made a very pretty soldier."

"Thank you, Master Marmaduke, but I leave cut and thrust to the gentles. I have seen eno' of the life of a retainer. He goes out on foot with his shield and his sword, or his bow and his quiver, while sir knight sits on horseback, armed from the crown to the toe, and the arrow slants off from rider and horse, as a stone from a tree. If the retainer is not sliced and carved into mincemeat, he comes home to a heap of ashes, and a handful of acres, harried and rivelled into a common; sir knight thanks him for his valour, but he does not build up his house; sir knight gets a grant from the king, or an heiress for his son, and Hob Yeoman turns gisarme and bill into ploughshares. Tut, tut, there's no liberty, no safety, no getting on, for a man who has no right to the gold spurs, but in the guild of his fellows; and London is the place for a born Saxon, like Nicholas Alwyn."

As the young aspirant thus uttered the sentiments,

which though others might not so plainly avow and shrewdly enforce them, tended towards that slow revolution, which, under all the stormy events that the superficial record we call HISTORY alone deigns to enumerate, was working that great change in the thoughts and habits of the people—that impulsion of the provincial citywards—that gradual formation of a class between knight and vassal—which became first *constitutionally* visible and distinct in the reign of Henry VII., Marmaduke Nevile, inly half-regretting and half-despising the reasonings of his foster-brother, was playing with his dagger, and glancing at his silver arrow.

"Yet you could still have eno' of the tall yeoman and the stout retainer about you to try for this bauble, and to break half a dozen thick heads with your quarter-staff!"

"True," said Nicholas; "you must recollect we are only, as yet, between the skin and the selle—half-trader, half-retainer. The old leaven will out:—'Eith to learn the cat to the kirn,'—as they say in the north. But that's not all; a man, to get on, must win respect from those who are to jostle him hereafter, and it's good policy to show those roystering youngsters that Nick Alwyn, stiff and steady though he be, has the old English metal in him, if it comes to a pinch; it's a lesson to yon lords too, save your quality, if they ever wish to ride roughshod over our guilds and companies. But eno' of me—Drawer, another stoup of the clary. Now, gentle sir, may I make bold to ask news of yourself? I saw, though I spake not before of it, that my Lord Montagu showed a cold face to his kinsman. I know something of these great men, though I be but a small one—a dog is no bad guide in the city he trots through."

"My dear foster-brother," said the Nevile: "you had ever more brains than myself, as is meet that you should have, since you lay by the steel casque, which, I take it, is meant as a substitute for us gentlemen and soldiers who have not so many brains to spare; and I will willingly profit by your counsels. You must know," he said, drawing nearer to the table, and his frank, hardy face assuming a more earnest expression, "that though my father, Sir Guy, at the instigation of his chief, the Earl of Westmoreland, and of the Lord Nevile, bore arms, at the first for King Henry—"

"Hush! hush! for Henry of Windsor!"

"Henry of Windsor!—so be it! yet being connected, like the nobles I have spoken of, with the blood of Warwick and Salisbury, it was ever with doubt and misgiving, and rather in the hope of ultimate compromise between both parties (which the Duke of York's moderation rendered probable), than of the extermination of either. But when, at the battle of York, Margaret of Anjou and her generals stained their victory by cruelties which could not fail to close the door on all conciliation; when the infant son of the duke himself was murdered, though a prisoner, in cold blood; when my father's kinsman, the Earl of Salisbury, was beheaded without trial; when the head of the brave and good duke, who had fallen in the field, was, against all knightly and kinglike generosity, mockingly exposed, like a dishonoured robber, on the gates of York, my father, shocked and revolted, withdrew at once from the army, and slacked not bit or spur till he found himself in his hall at Arsdale. His death, caused partly by his travail and vexation of spirit, together with his timely withdrawal

from the enemy, preserved his name from the attainder passed on the Lords Westmoreland and Nevile; and my eldest brother, Sir John, accepted the king's proffer of pardon, took the oaths of allegiance to Edward, and lives safe, if obscure, in his father's halls. Thou knowest, my friend, that a younger brother has but small honour at home. Peradventure, in calmer times, I might have bowed my pride to my calling, hunted my brother's dogs, flown his hawks, rented his keeper's lodge, and gone to my grave contented. But to a young man, who, from his childhood, had heard the stirring talk of knights and captains, who had seen valour and fortune make the way to distinction, and whose ears of late had been filled by the tales of wandering minstrels and dissours, with all the gay wonders of Edward's court, such a life soon grew distasteful. My father, on his death-bed (like thy uncle, the sub-prior), encouraged me little to follow his own footsteps. 'I see,' said he, 'that King Henry is too soft to rule his barons, and Margaret too fierce to conciliate the commons—the only hope of peace is in the settlement of the house of York. Wherefore let not thy father's errors stand in the way of thy advancement;'—and therewith he made his confessor—for he was no penman himself, the worthy old knight!—indite a letter to his great kinsman, the Earl of Warwick, commending me to his protection. He signed his mark, and set his seal to this missive, which I now have at mine hostelrie, and died the same day. My brother judged me too young then to quit his roof, and condemned me to bear his humours till, at the age of twenty-three, I could bear no more! So, having sold him my scant share in the heritage, and turned, like thee, bad land

into good nobles,—I joined a party of horse in their journey to London, and arrived yesterday at Master Sackbut's hostelrie, in Eastchepe. I went this morning to my Lord of Warwick, but he was gone to the king's, and hearing of the merry-makings here, I came hither for kill-time. A chance word of my Lord Montagu, whom St. Dunstan confound, made me conceit that a feat of skill with the cloth-yard might not ill preface my letter to the great earl. But, pardie! it seems I reckoned without my host, and in seeking to make my fortunes too rashly, I have helped to mar them." Wherewith he related the particulars of his interview with Montagu.

Nicholas Alwyn listened to him with friendly and thoughtful interest, and, when he had done, spoke thus:—

"The Earl of Warwick is a generous man, and though hot, bears little malice, except against those whom he deems misthink or insult him; he is proud of being looked up to as a protector, especially by those of his own kith and name. Your father's letter will touch the right string, and you cannot do better than deliver it with a plain story. A young partisan like thee is not to be despised. Thou must trust to Lord Warwick to set matters right with his brother: and now, before I say further let me ask thee, plainly, and without offence, Dost thou so love the house of York that no chance could ever make thee turn sword against it? Answer as I ask—under thy breath; those drawers are parlous spies!"

And here, in justice to Marmaduke Nevile and to his betters, it is necessary to preface his reply by some brief remarks, to which we must crave the earnest attention of the reader. What we call PATRIOT-

ISM, in the high and catholic acceptation of the word, was little if at all understood in days when passion, pride, and interest were motives little softened by reflection and education, and softened still less by the fusion of classes that characterised the small states of old, and marks the civilisation of a modern age. Though the right by descent of the house of York, if genealogy alone were consulted, was indisputably prior to that of Lancaster, yet the long exercise of power in the latter house, the genius of the Fourth Henry, and the victories of the Fifth, would, no doubt, have completely superseded the obsolete claims of the Yorkists, had Henry VI. possessed any of the qualities necessary for the time. As it was, men had got puzzled by genealogies and cavils; the sanctity attached to the king's name was weakened by his doubtful right to his throne, and the Wars of the rival Roses were at last (with two exceptions, presently to be noted) the mere contests of exasperated factions, in which public considerations were scarcely even made the blind to individual interest, prejudice, or passion.

Thus instances of desertion, from the one to the other party, even by the highest nobles, and on the very eve of battle, had grown so common, that little if any disgrace was attached to them; and any knight or captain held an affront to himself an amply sufficient cause for the transfer of his allegiance. It would be obviously absurd to expect in any of the actors of that age the more elevated doctrines of party faith and public honour, which clearer notions of national morality, and the salutary exercise of a large general opinion, free from the passions of single individuals, have brought into practice in our more enlightened days. The individual feelings of the individual MAN,

strong in himself, became his guide, and he was free in much from the regular and thoughtful virtues, as well as from the mean and plausible vices, of those who act only in bodies and corporations. The two exceptions to this idiosyncrasy of motive and conduct, were, first, in the general disposition of the rising middle class, especially in London, to connect great political interests with the more popular house of York. The commons in parliament had acted in opposition to Henry the Sixth, as the laws they wrung from him tended to show, and it was a popular and trading party that came, as it were, into power under King Edward. It is true that Edward was sufficiently arbitrary in himself, but a popular party will stretch as much as its antagonists in favour of despotism—*exercised on its enemies.* And Edward did his best to consult the interests of commerce, though the prejudices of the merchants interpreted those interests in a way opposite to that in which political economy now understands them. The second exception to the mere hostilities of individual chiefs and feudal factions has, not less than the former, been too much overlooked by historians. But this was a still more powerful element in the success of the house of York. The hostility against the Roman church, and the tenets of the Lollards, were shared by an immense part of the population. In the previous century an ancient writer computes that one-half the population were Lollards; and though the sect were diminished and silenced by fear, they still ceased not to exist, and their doctrines not only shook the Church under Henry VIII., but destroyed the throne by the strong arm of their children, the Puritans, under Charles I. It was impossible that these men should not have felt the deepest

resentment at the fierce and steadfast persecution they endured under the house of Lancaster; and without pausing to consider how far they would benefit under the dynasty of York, they had all those motives of revenge which are mistaken so often for the councils of policy, to rally round any standard raised against their oppressors. These two great exceptions to merely selfish policy, which it remains for the historian clearly and at length to enforce, these and these alone will always, to a sagacious observer, elevate the Wars of the Roses above those bloody contests for badges which we are, at first sight, tempted to regard them. But these deeper motives animated very little the nobles and the knightly gentry,* and with them the governing principles were, as we have just said, interest, ambition, and the zeal for the honour and advancement of houses and chiefs.

"Truly," said Marmaduke, after a short and rather embarrassed pause, "I am little beholden as yet to the house of York. There, where I see a noble benefactor, or a brave and wise leader, shall I think my sword and heart may best proffer allegiance."

"Wisely said," returned Alwyn, with a slight but half-sarcastic smile; "I asked thee the question because—(draw closer) there are wise men in our city who think the ties between Warwick and the king less strong than a ship's cable. And if thou attachest thy-

* Amongst many instances of the self-seeking of the time, not the least striking is the subservience of John Mowbray, the great Duke of Norfolk, to his old political enemy, the Earl of Oxford, the moment the last comes into power, during the brief restoration of Henry VI. John Paston, whose family had been sufficiently harassed by this great duke, says, with some glee, "The Duke and Duchess (of Norfolk) sue to him (Lord Oxford) as humbly as ever I did to them." *Paston Letters,* eccii.

self to Warwick, he will be better pleased, it may be, with talk of devotion to himself than professions of exclusive loyalty to King Edward. He who has little silver in his pouch must have the more silk on his tongue. A word to a Westmoreland or a Yorkshireman is as good as a sermon to men not born so far north. One word more, and I have done. Thou art kind, and affable, and gentle, my dear foster-brother, but it will not do for thee to be seen again with the goldsmith's headman. If thou wantest me, send for me at nightfall; I shall be found at Master Heyford's, in the Chepe. And if," added Nicholas with a prudent reminiscence, "thou succeedest at court, and canst recommend my master—there is no better goldsmith —it may serve me when I set up for myself, which I look to do shortly."

"But, to send for thee, my own foster-brother, at nightfall, as if I were ashamed!"

"Hout, Master Marmaduke, if thou were not ashamed of me, I should be ashamed to be seen with a gay springal like thee. Why, they would say in the Chepe that Nick Alwyn was going to ruin. No, no. Birds of a feather must keep shy of those that moult other colours; and so, my dear young master, this is my last shake of the hand. But hold. Dost thou know thy way back?"

"Oh, yes—never fear!" answered Marmaduke; "though I see not why so far, at least, we may not be companions."

"No, better as it is; after this day's work they will gossip about both of us, and we shall meet many who know my long visage on the way back. God keep thee; avise me how thou prosperest."

So saying, Nicholas Alwyn walked off, too delicate

to propose to pay his share of the reckoning with a superior. But when he had gone a few paces he turned back, and accosting the Nevile, as the latter was rebuckling his mantle, said—

"I have been thinking, Master Nevile, that these gold nobles, which it has been my luck to bear off, would be more useful in thy gipsire than mine. I have sure gains and small expenses—but a gentleman gains nothing, and his hand must be ever in his pouch —so——"

"Foster-brother!" said Marmaduke, haughtily, "a gentleman never borrows—except of the Jews, and with due interest. Moreover, I too have my calling; and as thy stall to thee, so to me my good sword. Saints keep thee! Be sure I will serve thee when I can."

"The devil's in these young strips of the herald's tree," muttered Alwyn, as he strode off; "as if it were dishonest to borrow a broad piece without cutting a throat for it! Howbeit, money is a prolific mother: and here is eno' to buy me a gold chain against I am alderman of London. Hout, thus goes the world—the knight's baubles become the alderman's badges—so much the better."

CHAPTER IV

ILL FARES THE COUNTRY MOUSE IN THE TRAPS OF TOWN

We trust we shall not be deemed discourteous, either, on the one hand, to those who value themselves on their powers of reflection, or, on the other, to those who lay claim to what, in modern phrenological jargon, is called the Organ of Locality, when we venture

to surmise that the two are rarely found in combination; nay, that it seems to us a very evident truism, that in proportion to the general activity of the intellect upon subjects of pith and weight, the mind will be indifferent to those minute external objects by which a less contemplative understanding will note, and map out, and impress upon the memory, the chart of the road its owner has once taken. Master Marmaduke Nevile, a hardy and acute forester from childhood, possessed to perfection the useful faculty of looking well and closely before him as he walked the earth, and ordinarily, therefore, the path he had once taken, however intricate and obscure, he was tolerably sure to retrace with accuracy, even at no inconsiderable distance of time—the outward senses of men are usually thus alert and attentive in the savage or the semi-civilised state. He had not, therefore, overvalued his general acuteness in the note and memory of localities, when he boasted of his power to refind his way to his hostelrie without the guidance of Alwyn. But it so happened that the events of this day, so memorable to him, withdrew his attention from external objects, to concentrate it within. And in marvelling and musing over the new course upon which his destiny had entered, he forgot to take heed of that which his feet should pursue; so that, after wandering unconsciously onward for some time, he suddenly halted in perplexity and amaze to find himself entangled in a labyrinth of scattered suburbs, presenting features wholly different from the road that had conducted him to the archery-ground in the forenoon. The darkness of the night had set in, but it was relieved by a somewhat faint and mist-clad moon, and some few and scattered stars, over which rolled, fleetly, thick clouds, por-

tending rain. No lamps at that time cheered the steps of the belated wanderer; the houses were shut up, and their inmates, for the most part, already retired to rest, and the suburbs did not rejoice, as the city, in the round of the watchman with his drowsy call to the inhabitants, "Hang out your lights!" The passengers, who at first, in various small groups and parties, had enlivened the stranger's way, seemed to him, unconscious as he was of the lapse of time, to have suddenly vanished from the thoroughfares; and he found himself alone in places thoroughly unknown to him, waking to the displeasing recollection that the approaches to the city were said to be beset by brawlers and ruffians of desperate character, whom the cessation of the civil wars had flung loose upon the skirts of society, to maintain themselves by deeds of rapine and plunder. As might naturally be expected, most of these had belonged to the defeated party, who had no claim to the good offices or charity of those in power. And although some of the Neviles had sided with the Lancastrians, yet the badge worn by Marmaduke was considered a pledge of devotion to the reigning house, and added a new danger to those which beset his path. Conscious of this—for he now called to mind the admonitions of his host in parting from the hostelrie—he deemed it but discreet to draw the hood of his mantle over the silver ornament; and while thus occupied, he heard not a step emerging from a lane at his rear, when suddenly a heavy hand was placed on his shoulder: he started, turned, and before him stood a man, whose aspect and dress betokened little to lessen the alarm of the uncourteous salutation. Marmaduke's dagger was bare on the instant.

"And what wouldst thou with me?" he asked.

"Thy purse and thy dagger!" answered the stranger.

"Come and take them," said the Nevile, unconscious that he uttered a reply famous in classic history, as he sprang backward a step or so, and threw himself into an attitude of defence. The stranger slowly raised a rude kind of mace, or rather club, with a ball of iron at the end, garnished with long spikes, as he replied, "Art thou mad eno' to fight for such trifles?"

"Art thou in the habit of meeting one Englishman who yields his goods, without a blow, to another?" retorted Marmaduke. "Go to—thy club does not daunt me." The stranger warily drew back a step, and applied a whistle to his mouth. The Nevie sprang at him, but the stranger warded off the thrust of the poniard with a light flourish of his heavy weapon; and had not the youth drawn back on the instant, it had been good night and a long day to Marmaduke Nevile. Even as it was, his heart beat quick, as the whirl of the huge weapon sent the air like a strong wind against his face. Ere he had time to renew his attack, he was suddenly seized from behind, and found himself struggling in the arms of two men. From these he broke, and his dagger glanced harmless against the tough jerkin of his first assailant. The next moment his right arm fell to his side, useless and deeply gashed. A heavy blow on the head,—the moon, the stars reeled in his eyes—and then darkness;—he knew no more. His assailants very deliberately proceeded to rifle the inanimate body, when one of them, perceiving the silver badge, exclaimed, with an oath, "One of the rampant Neviles! This cock at least shall crow no more." And laying the young man's head across his lap, while he stretched

back the throat with one hand, with the other he drew forth a long sharp knife, like those used by huntsmen in despatching the hart. Suddenly, and in the very moment when the blade was about to inflict the fatal gash, his hand was forcibly arrested, and a man, who had silently and unnoticed joined the ruffians, said in a stern whisper, "Rise and depart from thy brotherhood for ever. We admit no murderer."

The ruffian looked up in bewilderment. "Robin—captain—thou here!" he said falteringly.

"I must needs be everywhere, I see, if I would keep such fellows as thou and these from the gallows. What is this?—a silver arrow—the young archer—Um."

"A Nevile!" growled the would-be murderer.

"And for that very reason his life should be safe. Knowest thou not that Richard of Warwick, the great Nevile, ever spares the commons. Begone! I say." The captain's low voice grew terrible as he uttered the last words. The savage rose, and without a word stalked away.

"Look you, my masters," said Robin, turning to the rest, "soldiers must plunder a hostile country. While York is on the throne, England is a hostile country to us Lancastrians. Rob, then, rifle, if ye will. But he who takes life shall lose it. Ye know me!" The robbers looked down, silent and abashed. Robin bent a moment over the youth. "He will live," he muttered. "So! he already begins to awaken. One of these houses will give him shelter. Off, fellows, and take care of your necks!"

When Marmaduke, a few minutes after this colloquy, began to revive, it was with a sensation of dizziness, pain, and extreme cold. He strove to lift him-

self from the ground, and at length succeeded. He was alone: the place where he had lain was damp and red with stiffening blood. He tottered on for several paces, and perceived from a lattice, at a little distance, a light still burning. Now reeling—now falling, he still dragged on his limbs as the instinct attracted him to that sign of refuge. He gained the doorway of a detached and gloomy house, and sank on the stone before it to cry aloud. But his voice soon sank into deep groans, and once more, as his efforts increased the rapid gush of the blood, became insensible. The man styled Robin, who had so opportunely saved his life, now approached from the shadow of a wall, beneath which he had watched Marmaduke's movements. He neared the door of the house, and cried, in a sharp, clear voice — "Open, for the love of Christ!"

A head was now thrust from the lattice—the light vanished — a minute more, the door opened; and Robin, as if satisfied, drew hastily back, and vanished—saying to himself, as he strode along, "A young man's life must needs be dear to him; yet, had the lad been a lord, methinks I should have cared little to have saved for the people one tyrant more."

After a long interval, Marmaduke again recovered, and his eyes turned with pain from the glare of a light held to his face.

"He wakes, father!—he will live!" cried a sweet voice.

"Ay, he will live, child!" answered a deeper tone; and the young man muttered to himself, half audibly, as in a dream, "Holy Mother be blessed! it is sweet to live."

The room in which the sufferer lay rather exhibited

the remains of better fortunes than testified to the solid means of the present possessor. The ceiling was high and groined, and some tints of faded but once gaudy painting blazoned its compartments and hanging pendants. The walls had been rudely painted (for arras* then was rare, even among the wealthiest), but the colours were half obliterated by time and damp. The bedstead on which the wounded man reclined was curiously carved, with a figure of the Virgin at the head, and adorned with draperies, in which were wrought huge figures from scriptural subjects, but in the dress of the date of Richard II.—Solomon in pointed upturned shoes, and Goliath, in the armour of a crusader, frowning grimly upon the sufferer. By the bedside stood a personage, who, in reality, was but little past the middle age, but whose pale visage, intersected with deep furrows, whose long beard and hair, partially grey, gave him the appearance of advanced age: nevertheless there was something peculiarly striking in the aspect of the man. His forehead was singularly high and massive, but the back of the head was disproportionately small, as if the intellect too much preponderated over all the animal qualities for strength

* Mr. Hallam (History of the Middle Ages, chap. ix. part 2) implies a doubt whether great houses were furnished with hangings so soon as the reign of Edward IV. But there is abundant evidence to satisfy our learned historian upon that head. The Narrative of the "Lord of Grauthuse," edited by Sir F. Madden, specifies the hangings of cloth of gold in the apartments in which that lord was received by Edward IV.; also the hangings of white silk and linen in the chamber appropriated to himself at Windsor. But long before this period (to say nothing of the Bayeux Tapestry)—viz., in the reign of Edward III. (in 1344), a writ was issued to inquire into the mystery of working tapestry; and in 1398, Mr. Britton observes that the celebrated arras hangings at Warwick Castle are mentioned. (See Britton's Dictionary of Architecture and Archæology—art. Tapestry.)

in character and success in life. The eyes were soft, dark, and brilliant, but dreamlike and vague; the features in youth must have been regular and beautiful, but their contour was now sharpened by the hollowness of the cheeks and temples. The form, in the upper part, was nobly shaped, sufficiently muscular, if not powerful, and with the long throat and falling shoulders, which always gives something of grace and dignity to the carriage; but it was prematurely bent, and the lower limbs were thin and weak, as is common with men who have sparely used them; they seemed disproportioned to the broad chest, and still more to that magnificent and spacious brow. The dress of this personage corresponded with the aspect of his abode. The materials were those worn by the gentry, but they were old, threadbare, and discoloured with innumerable spots and stains. His hands were small and delicate, with large blue veins, that spoke of relaxed fibres; but their natural whiteness was smudged with smoke-stains, and his beard—a masculine ornament utterly out of fashion among the younger race in King Edward's reign, but when worn by the elder gentry, carefully trimmed and perfumed—was dishevelled into all the spiral and tangled curls, displayed in the sculptured head of some old Grecian sage or poet.

On the other side of the bed knelt a young girl of about sixteen, with a face exquisitely lovely in its delicacy and expression. She seemed about the middle stature, and her arms and neck, as displayed by the close-fitting vest, had already the smooth and rounded contour of dawning womanhood, while the face had still the softness, innocence, and inexpressible bloom of the child. There was a strong likeness between her and her father (for such the relationship), despite the

difference of sex and years—the same beautiful form of lip and brow—the same rare colour of the eyes, dark-blue, with black fringing lashes—and perhaps the common expression, at that moment, of gentle pity and benevolent anxiety contributed to render the resemblance stronger.

"Father, he sinks again!" said the girl.

"Sibyll," answered the man, putting his finger upon a line in a manuscript book that he held, "the authority saith, that a patient so contused should lose blood, and then the arm must be tightly bandaged. Verily we lack the wherewithal."

"Not so, father!" said the girl, and blushing, she turned aside, and took off the partelet of lawn, upon which holiday finery her young eyes perhaps that morning had turned with pleasure, and white as snow was the neck which was thus displayed—"this will suffice to bind his arm."

"But the book," said the father, in great perplexity —"the book telleth us not how the lancet should be applied. It is easy to say, 'Do this and do that:' but to do it once, it should have been done before. This is not among my experiments."

Luckily, perhaps, for Marmaduke, at this moment there entered an old woman, the solitary servant of the house, whose life, in those warlike times, had made her pretty well acquainted with the simpler modes of dealing with a wounded arm and a broken head. She treated with great disdain the learned authority referred to by her master; she bound the arm, plastered the head, and taking upon herself the responsibility to promise a rapid cure, insisted upon the retirement of father and child, and took her solitary watch beside the bed.

"If it had been any other mechanism than that of the vile human body!" muttered the philosopher, as if apologising to himself;—and with that he recovered his self-complacency and looked round him proudly.

CHAPTER V

WEAL TO THE IDLER—WOE TO THE WORKMAN

As Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, so it possibly might conform the heads of that day to a thickness suitable for the blows and knocks to which they were variously subjected; yet it was not without considerable effort, and much struggling, that Marmaduke's senses recovered the shock received, less by his flesh-wound and the loss of blood, than a blow on the seat of reason, that might have despatched a passable ox of these degenerate days. Nature, to say nothing of Madge's leechcraft, ultimately triumphed, and Marmaduke woke one morning in full possession of such understanding as Nature had endowed him with. He was then alone, and it was with much simple surprise that he turned his large hazel eyes from corner to corner of the unfamiliar room. He began to retrace and weave together sundry disordered and vague reminiscences: he commenced with the commencement, and clearly satisfied himself that he had been grievously wounded and sorely bruised; he then recalled the solitary light at the high lattice, and his memory found itself at the porch of the large, lonely, ruinous old house; then all became a bewildered and feverish dream. He caught at the vision of an old man with a long beard, whom he associated, displeasingly, with recollections of pain; he glanced off to a fair young

face, with eyes that looked tender pity whenever he writhed or groaned under the tortures that, no doubt, that old accursed carle had inflicted upon him. But even this face did not dwell with pleasure in his memory—it woke up confused and labouring associations of something weird and witchlike—of sorceresses and tymbesteres—of wild warnings screeched in his ear—of incantations and devilries, and doom. Impatient of these musings, he sought to leap from his bed, and was amazed that the leap subsided into a tottering crawl. He found an ewer and basin, and his ablutions refreshed and invigorated him. He searched for his raiment, and discovered it all except the mantle, dagger, hat, and girdle; and, while looking for these, his eye fell on an old tarnished steel mirror. He started as if he had seen his ghost; was it possible that his hardy face could have waned into that pale and almost femininely delicate visage? With the pride (call it not coxcombry) that then made the care of person the distinction of gentle birth, he strove to reduce into order the tangled locks of the long hair, of which a considerable portion above a part that seemed peculiarly sensitive to the touch had been mercilessly clipped; and as he had just completed this task, with little satisfaction and much inward chafing at the lack of all befitting essences and perfumes, the door gently opened, and the fair face he had dreamed of appeared at the aperture.

The girl uttered a cry of astonishment and alarm at seeing the patient thus arrayed and convalescent, and would suddenly have retreated, but the Nevile advanced, and courteously taking her hand—

"Fair maiden," said he, "if, as I trow, I owe to thy cares my tending and cure—nay, it may be a life hith-

erto of little worth, save to myself—do not fly from my thanks. May our lady of Walsingham bless and reward thee!"

"Sir," answered Sibyll, gently withdrawing her hands from his clasp, "our poor cares have been a slight return for thy generous protection to myself."

"To thee! ah, forgive me—how could I be so dull? I remember thy face now; and, perchance, I deserved the disaster I met with in leaving thee so discourteously. My heart smote me for it as thy light footfall passed from my side."

A slight blush, succeeded by a thoughtful smile—the smile of one who recalls and caresses some not displeasing remembrance, passed over Sibyll's charming countenance, as the sufferer said this with something of the grace of a well-born man, whose boyhood had been taught to serve God and the Ladies.

There was a short pause before she answered, looking down, "Nay, sir, I was sufficiently beholden to you;—and for the rest, all molestation was over. But I will now call your nurse—for it is to our servant, not us, that your thanks are due—to see to your state, and administer the proper medicaments."

"Truly, fair damsel, it is not precisely medicaments that I hunger and thirst for; but if your hospitality could spare me from the larder a manchet, or a corner of a pasty, and from the cellar a stoup of wine or a cup of ale, methinks it would tend more to restore me than those potions which are so strange to my taste that they rather offend than tempt it; and, pardie, it seemeth to my poor senses as if I had not broken bread for a week!"

"I am glad to hear you of such good cheer," answered Sibyll; "wait but a moment or so, till I consult your physician."

And, so saying, she closed the door, slowly descended the steps, and pursued her way into what seemed more like a vault than a habitable room, where she found the single servant of the household. Time, which makes changes so fantastic in the dress of the better classes, has a greater respect for the costume of the humbler; and, though the garments were of a very coarse sort of serge, there was not so great a difference, in point of comfort and sufficiency, as might be supposed, between the dress of old Madge and that of some primitive servant in the north during the last century. The old woman's face was thin and pinched, but its sharp expression brightened into a smile as she caught sight, through the damps and darkness, of the gracious form of her young mistress. "Ah, Madge," said Sibyll, with a sigh, "it is a sad thing to be poor!"

"For such as thou, Mistress Sibyll, it is indeed. It does not matter for the like of us. But it goes to my old heart when I see you shut up here, or worse, going out in that old courtpie and wimple—you, a knight's grandchild—you, who have played round a queen's knees, and who might have been so well-to-do, an' my master had thought a little more of the gear of this world. But patience is a good palfrey, and will carry us a long day. And when the master has done what he looks for, why the king—sith we must so call the new man on the throne—will be sure to reward him; but, sweetheart, tarry not here; it's an ill air for your young lips to drink in. What brings you to old Madge?"

"The stranger is recovered, and—"

"Ay, I warrant me, I have cured worse than he. He must have a spoonful of broth—I have not forgot it. You see I wanted no dinner myself—what is din-

ner to old folks!—so I e'en put it all in the pot for him. The broth will be brave and strong."

"My poor Madge, God requite you for what you suffer for us! But he has asked"—here was another sigh and a downcast look that did not dare to face the consternation of Madge, as she repeated, with a half-smile—"he has asked—for meat, and a stoup of wine, Madge!"

"Eh, sirs! And where is he to get them? Not that it will be bad for the lad, either. Wine! There's Master Sancroft, of the Oak, will not trust us a penny, the seely hilding, and——"

"Oh, Madge, I forgot!—we can still sell the gittern for something. Get on your wimple, Madge—quick—while I go for it."

"Why, Mistress Sibyll, that's your only pleasure, when you sit all alone, the long summer days."

"It will be more pleasure to remember that it supplied the wants of my father's guest," said Sibyll; and retracing the way up the stairs, she returned with the broken instrument, and despatched Madge with it, laden with instructions that the wine should be of the best. She then once more mounted the rugged steps, and halting a moment at Marmaduke's door, as she heard his feeble step walking impatiently to and fro, she ascended higher, where the flight, winding up a square dilapidated turret, became rougher, narrower, and darker, and opened the door of her father's retreat.

It was a room so bare of ornament and furniture that it seemed merely wrought out of the mingled rubble and rough stones which composed the walls of the mansion, and was lighted towards the street by a narrow slit, glazed, it is true,—which all the windows of

the house were not,—but the sun scarcely pierced the dull panes and the deep walls in which they were sunk. The room contained a strong furnace and a rude laboratory. There were several strange-looking mechanical contrivances scattered about, several manuscripts upon some oaken shelves, and a large pannier of wood and charcoal in the corner. In that poverty-stricken house, the money spent on fuel alone, in the height of summer, would have comfortably maintained the inmates; but neither Sibyll nor Madge ever thought to murmur at this waste, dedicated to what had become the vital want of a man who drew air in a world of his own. This was the first thing to be provided for; and Science was of more imperative necessity than even Hunger.

Adam Warner was indeed a creature of remarkable genius—and genius, in an age where it is not appreciated, is the greatest curse the iron Fates can inflict on man. If not wholly without the fond fancies which led the wisdom of the darker ages to the philosopher's stone and the elixir, he had been deterred from the chase of a chimera by want of means to pursue it; for it required the resources or the patronage of a prince or noble to obtain the costly ingredients consumed in the alchemist's crucible. In early life, therefore, and while yet in possession of a competence, derived from a line of distinguished and knightly ancestors, Adam Warner had devoted himself to the surer, and less costly, study of the mathematics, which then had begun to attract the attention of the learned, but which was still looked upon by the vulgar as a branch of the black art. This pursuit had opened to him the insight into discoveries equally useful and sublime. They necessitated a still more various knowledge; and

in an age when there was no division of labour, and rare and precarious communication among students, it became necessary for each discoverer to acquire sufficient science for his own collateral experiments.

In applying mathematics to the practical purposes of life, in recognising its mighty utilities to commerce and civilisation, Adam Warner was driven to conjoin with it, not only an extensive knowledge of languages, but many of the rudest tasks of the mechanist's art; and chemistry was, in some of his researches, summoned to his aid. By degrees, the tyranny that a man's genius exercises over his life, abstracted him from all external objects. He had loved his wife tenderly, but his rapid waste of his fortune in the purchase of instruments and books, then enormously dear, and the neglect of all things not centred in the hope to be the benefactor of the world, had ruined her health and broken her heart. Happily Warner perceived not her decay till just before her death; happily he never conceived its cause; for her soul was wrapt in his. She revered, and loved, and never upbraided him. Her heart was the martyr to his mind. Had she foreseen the future destinies of her daughter, it might have been otherwise. She could have remonstrated with the father, though not with the husband. But, fortunately, as it seemed to her, she (a Frenchwoman by birth) had passed her youth in the service of Margaret of Anjou, and that haughty queen, who was equally warm to friends and inexorable to enemies, had, on her attendant's marriage, promised to ensure the fortunes of her offspring. Sibyll, at the age of nine,—between seven and eight years before the date the story enters on, and two years prior to the fatal field of Towton, which gave to Edward the throne of Eng-

land, had been admitted among the young girls whom the custom of the day ranked amidst the attendants of the queen; and in the interval that elapsed before Margaret was obliged to dismiss her to her home, her mother died. She died without foreseeing the reverses that were to ensue, in the hope that her child, at least, was nobly provided for, and not without the belief (for there is so much faith in love!) that her husband's researches, which, in his youth had won favour of the Protector duke of Gloucester, the most enlightened prince of his time, would be crowned at last with the rewards and favours of his king. That precise period was, indeed, the fairest that had yet dawned upon the philosopher. Henry VI., slowly recovering from one of those attacks which passed for imbecility, had condescended to amuse himself with various conversations with Warner, urged to it first by representations of the unholy nature of the student's pursuits; and, having satisfied his mind of his learned subject's orthodoxy, the poor monarch had taken a sort of interest, not so much, perhaps, in the objects of Warner's occupations, as in that complete absorption from actual life which characterised the subject, and gave him in this a melancholy resemblance to the king. While the House of Lancaster was on the throne, the wife felt that her husband's pursuits would be respected, and his harmless life safe from the fierce prejudices of the people; and the good queen would not suffer him to starve, when the last mark was expended in devices how to benefit his country:—and in these hopes the woman died!

A year afterwards, all at court was in disorder—armed men supplied the service of young girls, and Sibyll, with a purse of broad pieces, soon converted

into manuscripts, was sent back to her father's desolate home. There had she grown a flower amidst ruins—with no companion of her own age, and left to bear, as her sweet and affectionate nature well did, the contrast between the luxuries of a court and the penury of a hearth which, year after year, hunger and want came more and more sensibly to invade.

Sibyll had been taught, even as a child, some accomplishments little vouchsafed, then, to either sex—she could read and write; and Margaret had not so wholly lost, in the sterner north, all reminiscence of the accomplishments that graced her father's court, as to neglect the education of those brought up in her household. Much attention was given to music, for it soothed the dark hours of King Henry; the blazoning of missals or the lives of saints, with the labours of the loom, were also among the resources of Sibyll's girlhood, and by these last she had, from time to time, served to assist the maintenance of the little family of which, child though she was, she became the actual head. But latterly—that is, for the last few weeks, even these sources failed her; for as more peaceful times allowed her neighbours to interest themselves in the affairs of others, the dark reports against Warner had revived. His name became a by-word of horror—the lonely light at the lattice burning till midnight—against all the early usages and habits of the day—the dark smoke of the furnace, constant in summer as in winter, scandalised the religion of the place far and near; and finding, to their great dissatisfaction, that the king's government and the Church interfered not for their protection, and unable themselves to volunteer any charges against the recluse (for the cows in the neighbourhood remained provokingly healthy),

they came suddenly, and, as it were by one of those common sympathies which in all times the huge persecutor we call the PUBLIC manifests, when a victim is to be crushed,—to the pious resolution of starving where they could not burn. Why buy the quaint devilries of the wizard's daughter?—no luck could come of it. A missal blazoned by such hands—an embroidery worked at such a loom, was like the Lord's Prayer read backwards. And one morning, when poor Sibyll stole out as usual to vend a month's labour, she was driven from door to door with oaths and curses.

Though Sibyll's heart was gentle, she was not without a certain strength of mind. She had much of the patient devotion of her mother, much of the quiet fortitude of her father's nature. If not comprehending to the full the loftiness of Warner's pursuits, she still anticipated from them an ultimate success which reconciled her to all temporary sacrifices. The violent prejudices—the ignorant cruelty, thus brought to bear against existence itself, filled her with sadness, it is true, but not unmixed with that contempt for her persecutors, which, even in the meekest tempers, takes the sting from despair. But hunger pressed. Her father was nearing the goal of his discoveries, and in a moment of that pride which in its very contempt for appearances braves them all, Sibyll had stolen out to the pastime-ground,—with what result has been seen already. Having thus accounted for the penury of the mansion, we return to its owner.

Warner was contemplating with evident complacency and delight the model of a machine which had occupied him for many years, and which he imagined he was now rapidly bringing to perfection. His hands

and face were grimed with the smoke of his forge, and his hair and beard, neglected as usual, looked parched and dried up, as if with the constant fever that burned within.

"Yes—yes," he muttered—"how they will bless me for this! What Roger Bacon only suggested I shall accomplish! How it will change the face of the globe! What wealth it will bestow on ages yet unborn!"

"My father," said the gentle voice of Sibyll—"my poor father, thou hast not tasted bread to-day."

Warner turned, and his face relaxed into a tender expression as he saw his daughter.

"My child," he said, pointing to his model, "the time comes when *it will live!* Patience—patience!"

"And who would not have patience with thee, and *for* thee, father?" said Sibyll, with enthusiasm speaking on every feature.—"What is the valour of knight and soldier—dull statues of steel—to thine? Thou, with thy naked breast, confronting all dangers—sharper than the lance and glaive, and all——"

"All to make England great!"

"Alas! what hath England merited from men like thee! The people more savage than their rulers, clamour for the stake, the gibbet, and the dungeon, for all who strive to make them wiser. Remember the death of Bolingbroke;*—a wizard, because, O father! —because his pursuits were thine!"

Adam, startled by this burst, looked at his daughter with more attention than he usually evinced to any living thing: "Child," he said, at length, shaking his

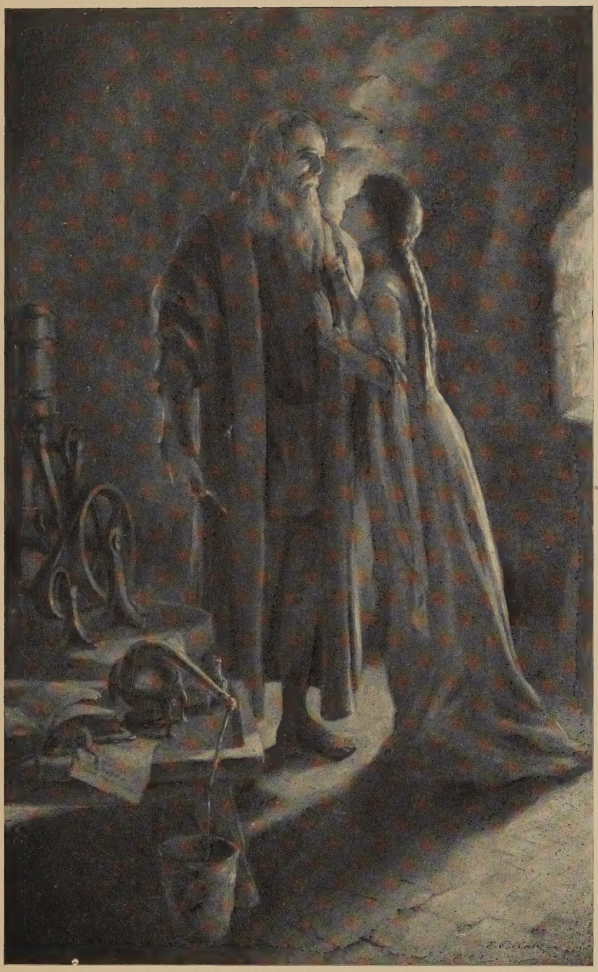
* A mathematician accused as an accomplice, in sorcery, of Eleanor Cobham, wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and hanged upon that charge. His contemporary (William Wyrcestre) highly extols his learning.

head in grave reproof, "let me not say to thee, 'O thou of little faith!' There were no heroes were there no martyrs!"

"Do not frown on me, father," said Sibyll, sadly; "let the world frown—not thou! Yes, thou art right. Thou must triumph at last." And suddenly her whole countenance, changing into a soft and caressing endearment, she added—"But now come, father. Thou hast laboured well for this morning. We shall have a little feast for thee in a few minutes. And the stranger is recovered, thanks to our leechcraft. He is impatient to see and thank thee."

"Well—well, I come, Sibyll," said the student, with a regretful, lingering look at his model, and a sigh to be disturbed from its contemplation; and he slowly quitted the room with Sibyll.

"But not, dear sir and father, not thus—not quite thus—will you go to the stranger, well-born like yourself. Oh, no! your Sibyll is proud, you know—proud of her father." So saying, she clung to him fondly, and drew him mechanically, for he had sunk into a reverie, and heeded her not, into an adjoining chamber in which he slept. The comforts even of the gentry, of men with the acres that Adam had sold, were then few and scanty. The nobles and the wealthy merchants, indeed, boasted many luxuries that excelled in gaud and pomp those of their equals now. But the class of the *gentry* who had very little money at command, were contented with hardships from which a menial of this day would revolt. What they could spend in luxury was usually consumed in dress and the table they were obliged to keep. These were the essentials of dignity. Of furniture there was a woeful stint. In many houses, even of knights, an edifice



"My poor father, thou hast not tasted bread to-day."

large enough to occupy a quadrangle, was composed more of offices than chambers inhabited by the owners; rarely boasting more than three beds, which were bequeathed in wills as articles of great value. The reader must, therefore, not be surprised that Warner's abode contained but one bed, properly so called, and that was now devoted to Nevile. The couch which served the philosopher for bed was a wretched pallet, stretched on the floor, stuffed with straw,—with rough say or serge, and an old cloak for the coverings. His daughter's, in a room below, was little better. The walls were bare; the whole house boasted but one chair, which was in Marmaduke's chamber—stools, or settles, of rude oak, elsewhere supplied their place. There was no chimney, except in Nevile's room, and in that appropriated to the forge.

To this chamber, then, resembling a dungeon in appearance, Sibyll drew the student, and here, from an old worm-eaten chest, she carefully extracted a gown of brown velvet, which his father, Sir Armine, had bequeathed to him by will, faded, it is true, but still such as the low-born wore not,* trimmed with fur, and clasped with a brooch of gold. And then she held the ewer and basin to him, while, with the docility of a child, he washed the smoke-soil from his hands and face. It was touching to see in this, as in all else, the reverse of their natural position—the child tending and heeding, and protecting, as it were, the father; and that not from his deficiency, but his greatness; not because he was below the vulgar intelligences of life, but above them. And certainly, when, his patriarchal hair and beard smoothed into order, and his velvet

* By the sumptuary laws only a knight was entitled to wear velvet.

gown flowing in majestic folds around a figure tall and commanding, Sibyll followed her father into Marmaduke's chamber,—she might well have been proud of his appearance. And she felt the innocent vanity of her sex and age, in noticing the half-start of surprise with which Marmaduke regarded his host, and the tone of respect in which he proffered him his salutations and thanks. Even his manner altered to Sibyll; it grew less frank and affable, more courtly and reserved: and when Madge came to announce that the refection was served, it was with a blush of shame, perhaps, at his treatment of the poor gittern-player on the pastime-ground, that the Nevile extended his left hand, for his right was still not at his command, to lead the damsel to the hall.

This room, which was divided from the entrance by a screen, and, except a small closet that adjoined it, was the only sitting-room in a day, when, as now on the Continent, no shame was attached to receiving visitors in sleeping apartments, was long and low; an old, and very narrow table, that might have feasted thirty persons, stretched across a dais raised upon a stone floor; there was no rere-dosse, or fire-place, which does not seem at that day to have been an absolute necessity in the houses of the metropolis and its suburbs; its place being supplied by a movable brazier. Three oak stools were placed in state at the board, and to one of these Marmaduke, in a silence unusual to him, conducted the fair Sibyll.

"You will forgive our lack of provisions," said Warner, relapsing into the courteous fashions of his elder days, which the unwonted spectacle of a cold capon, a pasty, and a flask of wine, brought to his mind by a train of ideas that actively glided by the interven-

ing circumstances which ought to have filled him with astonishment at the sight, "for my Sibyll is but a young housewife, and I am a simple scholar, of few wants."

"Verily," answered Marmaduke, finding his tongue as he attacked the pasty, "I see nothing that the most dainty need complain of; fair Mistress Sibyll, your dainty lips will not, I trow, refuse me the waisall.* To you also, worshipful sir! Gramercy! it seems that there is nothing which better stirs a man's appetite than a sick bed. And, speaking thereof, deign to inform me, kind sir, how long I have been indebted to your hospitality. Of a surety, this pasty hath an excellent flavour, and if not venison, is something better. But to return, it mazes me much to think what time hath passed since my encounter with the robbers."

"They were robbers, then, who so cruelly assailed thee?" observed Sibyll.

"Have I not said so—surely, who else? and, as I was remarking to your worshipful father, whether this mischance happened hours, days, months, or years ago, beshrew me if I can venture the smallest guess."

Master Warner smiled, and observing that some reply was expected from him, said, "Why, indeed, young sir, I fear I am almost as oblivious as yourself. It was not yesterday that you arrived, nor the day before, nor—Sibyll, my child, how long is it since this gentleman hath been our guest?"

"This is the fifth day," answered Sibyll.

"So long! and I like a senseless log by the wayside, when others are pushing on bit and spur, to the great road. I pray you, sir, tell me the news of the morn-

* *i.e.*, Waissail or wassal; the spelling of the time is adopted in the text.

ing. The Lord Warwick is still in London—the court still at the Tower?"

Poor Adam, whose heart was with his model, and who had now satisfied his temperate wants, looked somewhat bewildered and perplexed by this question: "The king, save his honoured head," said he, inclining his own, "is, I fear me, always at the Tower since his unhappy detention, but he minds it not, sir—he heeds it not; his soul is not on this side Paradise."

Sibyll uttered a faint exclamation of fear at this dangerous indiscretion of her father's absence of mind: and drawing closer to Nevile, she put her hand with touching confidence on his arm, and whispered—"You will not repeat this, sir! my father lives only in his studies, and he has never known but one king!"

Marmaduke turned his bold face to the maid, and pointed to the salt-cellar, as he answered in the same tone—"Does the brave man betray his host?"

There was a moment's silence. Marmaduke rose. "I fear," said he, "that I must now leave you; and, while it is yet broad noon, I must indeed be blind if I again miss my way."

This speech suddenly recalled Adam from his meditations, for whenever his kindly and simple benevolence was touched, even his mathematics and his model were forgotten. "No, young sir," said he, "you must not quit us yet; your danger is not over. Exercise may bring fever. Celsus recommends quiet. You must consent to tarry with us a day or two more."

"Can you tell me," said the Nevile, hesitatingly, "what distance it is to the Temple-gate, or the nearest wharf on the river?"

"Two miles, at the least," answered Sibyll.

"Two miles!—and now I mind me, I have not the

accoutrements that beseem me. Those hildings have stolen my mantle (which, I perceive, by the way, is but a rustic garment, now laid aside for the super-tunic), and my hat and dague, nor have they left even a half groat to supply their place. Verily, therefore, since ye permit me to burden your hospitality longer, I will not say ye nay, provided you, worshipful sir, will suffer one of your people to step to the house of one Master Heyford, goldsmith, in the Chepe, and crave one Nicholas Alwyn, his freedman, to visit me. I can commission him touching my goods left at mine hostelrie, and learn some other things which it behoves me to know."

"Assuredly. Sibyll, tell Simon or Jonas to put himself under our guest's order."

Simon or Jonas! The poor Adam absolutely forgot that Simon and Jonas had quitted the house these six years! How could he look on the capon, the wine, and the velvet gown trimmed with fur, and not fancy himself back in the heyday of his wealth?

Sibyll half smiled and half sighed, as she withdrew to consult with her sole counsellor, Madge, how the guest's orders were to be obeyed, and how, alas! the board was to be replenished for the evening meal. But in both these troubles she was more fortunate than she anticipated. Madge had sold the broken gittern, for musical instruments were then, comparatively speaking, dear (and this had been a queen's gift), for sufficient to provide decently for some days, and, elated herself with the prospect of so much good cheer, she readily consented to be the messenger to Nicholas Alwyn.

When with a light step, and a lighter heart, Sibyll tripped back to the hall, she was scarcely surprised to find the guest alone. Her father, after her departure,

had begun to evince much restless perturbation. He answered Marmaduke's queries but by abstracted and desultory monosyllables, and seeing his guest at length engaged in contemplating some old pieces of armour hung upon the walls, he stole stealthily and furtively away, and halted not till once more before his beloved model.

Unaware of his departure, Marmaduke, whose back was turned to him, was, as he fondly imagined, enlightening his host with much soldier-like learning as to the old helmets and weapons that graced the hall. "Certes, my host," said he, musingly, "that sort of casque, which has not, I opine, been worn this century, had its merits; the vizor is less open to the arrows. But, as for these chain suits, they suited only —I venture, with due deference, to declare—the Wars of the Crusades, where the enemy fought chiefly with dart and scymetar. They would be but a sorry defence against the mace and battle-axe; nevertheless, they were light for man and horse, and in some service, especially against foot, might be revived with advantage. Think you not so?"

He turned, and saw the arch face of Sibyll.

"I crave pardon for my blindness, gentle damsel," said he, in some confusion, "but your father was here anon."

"His mornings are so devoted to labour," answered Sibyll, "that he entreats you to pardon his discourtesy. Meanwhile, if you would wish to breathe the air, we have a small garden in the rear;" and so saying, she led the way into the small withdrawing-room, or rather closet, which was her own favourite chamber, and which communicated, by another door, with a broad, neglected grass-plot, surrounded by high

walls, having a raised terrace in front, divided by a low stone Gothic palisade from the green sward.

On the palisade sat droopingly, and half asleep, a solitary peacock; but when Sibyll and the stranger appeared at the door, he woke up suddenly, descended from his height, and, with a vanity not wholly unlike his young mistress's wish to make the best possible display in the eyes of a guest—spread his plumes broadly in the sun. Sibyll threw him some bread, which she had taken from the table for that purpose; but the proud bird, however hungry, disdained to eat, till he had thoroughly satisfied himself that his glories had been sufficiently observed.

"Poor proud one," said Sibyll, half to herself, "thy plumage lasts with thee through all changes."

"Like the name of a brave knight," said Marmaduke, who overheard her.

"Thou thinkest of the career of arms."

"Surely—I am a Nevile!"

"Is there no fame to be won but that of a warrior?"

"Not that I weet of, or heed for, Mistress Sibyll."

"Thinkest thou it were nothing to be a minstrel, who gave delight?—a scholar, who dispelled darkness?"

"For the scholar? certes, I respect holy Mother Church, which they tell me alone produces that kind of wonder with full safety to the soul, and that only in the higher prelates and dignitaries. For the minstrel, I love him—I would fight for him—I would give him at need the last penny in my gipsire. But it is better to do deeds than to sing them."

Sibyll smiled, and the smile perplexed and half displeased the young adventurer. But the fire of the young man had its charm.

By degrees, as they walked to and fro the neglected terrace, their talk flowed free and familiar; for Marmaduke, like most young men, full of himself, was joyous with the happy egotism of a frank and careless nature. He told his young confidante of a day his birth, his history, his hopes, and fears; and in return he learned, in answer to the questions he addressed to her, so much, at least, of her past and present life—as the reverses of her father, occasioned by costly studies—her own brief sojourn at the court of Margaret—and the solitude, if not the struggles, in which her youth was consumed. It would have been a sweet and grateful sight to some kindly bystander to hear these pleasant communications between two young persons so unfriended, and to imagine that hearts thus opened to each other unite in one. But Sibyll, though she listened to him with interest, and found a certain sympathy in his aspirations, was ever and anon secretly comparing him to one, the charm of whose voice still lingered in her ears; and her intellect, cultivated and acute, detected in Marmaduke deficient education—and that limited experience which is the folly and the happiness of the young.

On the other hand, whatever admiration Nevile might conceive, was strangely mixed with surprise, and, it might almost be said, with fear. This girl, with her wise converse and her child's face, was a character so thoroughly new to him. Her language was superior to what he had ever heard, the words more choice, the current more flowing—was that to be attributed to her court-training or her learned parentage?

"Your father, fair mistress," said he, rousing himself in one of the pauses of their conversation—"your

father, then, is a mighty scholar, and I suppose knows Latin like English?"

"Why, a hedge priest pretends to know Latin," said Sibyll, smiling; "my father is one of the six men living who have learned the Greek and the Hebrew."

"Gramercy!" cried Marmaduke, crossing himself. "That is awsome indeed! He has taught you his lere in the tongues?"

"Nay, I know but my own and the French; my mother was a native of France."

"The Holy Mother be praised!" said Marmaduke, breathing more freely; "for French I have heard my father and uncle say is a language fit for gentles and knights, specially those who come, like the Neviles, from Norman stock. This Margaret of Anjou—didst thou love her well, Mistress Sibyll?"

"Nay," answered Sibyll, "Margaret commanded awe, but she scarcely permitted love from an inferior: and though gracious and well-governed when she so pleased, it was but to those whom she wished to win. She cared not for the heart, if the hand or the brain could not assist her. But, poor queen, who could blame her for this?—her nature was turned from its milk; and, when, more lately, I have heard how many she trusted most have turned against her, I rebuked myself that——"

"Thou wert not by her side!" added the Nevile, observing her pause, and with the generous thought of a gentleman and a soldier.

"Nay, I meant not that so expressly, Master Nevile, but rather that I had ever murmured at her haste and shrewdness of mood. By her side, said you?—alas! I have a nearer duty at home; my father is all in this world to me! Thou knowest not, Master Nevile, how

it flatters the weak to think there is some one they can protect. But eno' of myself. Thou wilt go to the stout earl, thou wilt pass to the court, thou wilt win the gold spurs, and thou wilt fight with the strong hand, and leave others to cozen with the keen head."

"She is telling my fortune!" muttered Marmaduke, crossing himself again. "The gold spurs—I thank thee, Mistress Sibyll!—will it be on the battle-field that I shall be knighted, and by whose hand?"

Sibyll glanced her bright eye at the questioner, and seeing his wistful face, laughed outright.

"What, thinkest thou, Master Nevile, I can read thee all riddles without my sieve and my shears?"

"They are essentials, then, Mistress Sibyll?" said the Nevile, with blunt simplicity. "I thought ye more learned damozels might tell by the palm, or the—why dost thou laugh at me?"

"Nay," answered Sibyll, composing herself. "It is my right to be angered. Sith thou wouldst take me to be a witch, all that I can tell thee of thy future (she added touchingly) is from that which I have seen of thy past. Thou hast a brave heart, and a gentle; thou hast a frank tongue, and a courteous; and these qualities make men honoured and loved—except they have the gifts which turn all into gall, and bring oppression for honour, and hate for love."

"And those gifts, gentle Sibyll?"

"Are my father's," answered the girl, with another and a sadder change in her expressive countenance. And the conversation flagged till Marmaduke, feeling more weakened by his loss of blood than he had conceived it possible, retired to his chamber to repose himself.

CHAPTER VI

MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE FEARS FOR THE SPIRITUAL WEAL OF HIS HOST AND HOSTESS

Before the hour of supper, which was served at six o'clock, Nicholas Alwyn arrived at the house indicated to him by Madge. Marmaduke, after a sound sleep, which was little flattering to Sibyll's attractions, had descended to the hall in search of the maiden and his host, and finding no one, had sauntered in extreme weariness and impatience into the little withdrawing-closet, where, as it was now dusk, burned a single candle in a melancholy and rustic sconce; standing by the door that opened on the garden, he amused himself with watching the peacock, when his friend, following Madge into the chamber, tapped him on the shoulder.

"Well, Master Nevile. Ha! by St. Thomas, what has chanced to thee? Thine arm swathed up, thy locks shorn, thy face blanched! My honoured foster-brother, thy Westmoreland blood seems over-hot for Cockaigne!"

"If so, there are plenty in this city of cut-throats, to let out the surplusage," returned Marmaduke; and he briefly related his adventure to Nicholas.

When he had done, the kind trader reproached himself for having suffered Marmaduke to find his way alone. "The suburbs abound with these miscreants," said he; "and there is more danger in a night-walk near London, than in the loneliest glens of green Sherwood—more shame to the city! An' I be Lord Mayor, one of these days, I will look to it better. But our civil wars make men hold human life very cheap, and there's parlous little care from the great, of the

blood and limbs of the wayfarers. But war makes thieves—and peace hangs them! Only wait till I manage affairs!"

"Many thanks to thee, Nicholas," returned the Nevile; "but foul befall me if ever I seek protection from sheriff or mayor! A man who cannot keep his own life with his own right hand, merits well to haplose it; and I, for one, shall think ill of the day when an Englishman looks more to the laws than his good arm for his safety; but, letting this pass, I beseech thee to advise me if my Lord Warwick be still in the city?"

"Yes, marry, I know that by the hostelries, which swarm with his badges, and the oxen, that go in scores to the shambles! It is a shame to the Estate to see one subject so great, and it bodes no good to our peace. The earl is preparing the most magnificent embassage that ever crossed the salt seas—I would it were not to the French, for our interests lie contrary; but thou hast some days yet to rest here and grow stout, for I would not have thee present thyself with a visage of chalk to a man who values his kind mainly by their thews and their sinews. Moreover, thou shouldst send for the tailor, and get thee trimmed to the mark. It would be a long step in thy path to promotion, an' the earl would take thee in his train; and the gaudier thy plumes, why the better chance for thy flight. Wherefore, since thou sayest they are thus friendly to thee under this roof, bide yet awhile peacefully—I will send thee the mercer, and the clothier, and the tailor, to divert thy impatience. And, as these fellows are greedy, my gentle and dear Master Nevile, may I ask, without offence, how thou art provided?"

"Nay, nay, I have moneys at the hostelrie, an' thou wilt send me my mails. For the rest, I like thy advice, and will take it."

"Good!" answered Nicholas. "Hem! thou seemest to have got into a poor house—a decayed gentleman, I wot, by the slovenly ruin!"

"I would that were the worst," replied Marmaduke, solemnly, and under his breath, and therewith he repeated to Nicholas the adventure on the pastime-ground, the warnings of the timbrel-girls, and the "awsome" learning and strange pursuits of his host. As for Sibyll, he was evidently inclined to attribute to glamour the reluctant admiration with which she had inspired him. "For," said he, "though I deny not that the maid is passing fair—there be many with rosier cheeks, and taller by this hand!"

Nicholas listened, at first, with the peculiar expression of shrewd sarcasm which mainly characterised his intelligent face, but his attention grew more earnest before Marmaduke had concluded.

"In regard to the maiden," said he, smiling and shaking his head, "it is not always the handsomest that win us the most—while fair Meg went a maying, black Mog got to church—and I give thee more reasonable warning than thy timbrel-girls, when, in spite of thy cold language, I bid thee take care of thyself against her attractions; for, verily, my dear foster-brother, thou must mend, and not mar thy fortune, by thy love matters; and keep thy heart whole for some fair one with marks in her gipsire, whom the earl may find out for thee. Love and raw pease are two ill things in the porridge-pot. But the father!—I mind me now that I have heard of his name, through my friend Master Caxton, the mercer, as one of prodigious skill in the mathematics. I should like much to see him, and, with thy leave (an' he ask me), will tarry to supper. But what are these?"—and Nicholas took

up one of the illuminated MSS. which Sibyll had prepared for sale. "By the blood! this is couthly and marvellously blazoned."

The book was still in his hand when Sibyll entered. Nicholas stared at her, as he bowed with a stiff and ungraceful embarrassment, which often at first did injustice to his bold, clear intellect, and his perfect self-possession in matters of trade or importance.

"The first woman face," muttered Nicholas to himself, "I ever saw that had the sense of a man's. And by the rood, what a smile!"

"Is this thy friend, Master Nevile?" said Sibyll, with a glance at the goldsmith. "He is welcome. But is it fair and courteous, Master Nelwyn——"

"Alwyn, an' it please you, fair mistress. A humble name, but good Saxon—which, I take it, Nelwyn is not," interrupted Nicholas.

"Master Alwyn, forgive me; but can I forgive thee so readily for thy espial of my handiwork, without licence or leave?"

"Yours, comely mistress!" exclaimed Nicholas, opening his eyes, and unheeding the gay rebuke—"why, this is a master-hand. My Lord Scales—nay, the Earl of Worcester himself, hath scarce a finer in all his amassment."

"Well, I forgive thy fault for thy flattery; and I pray thee, in my father's name, to stay and sup with thy friend."

Nicholas bowed low, and still riveted his eyes on the book with such open admiration, that Marmaduke thought it right to excuse his abstraction; but there was something in that admiration which raised the spirits of Sibyll, which gave her hope when hope was well-nigh gone, and she became so vivacious, so

debonnair, so charming, in the flow of a gaiety natural to her, and very uncommon with English maidens, but which she took partly, perhaps, from her French blood, and partly from the example of girls and maidens of French extraction in Margaret's court, that Nicholas Alwyn thought he had never seen any one so irresistible. Madge having now served the evening meal, put in her head to announce it, and Sibyll withdrew to summon her father.

"I trust he will not tarry too long, for I am sharp set," muttered Marmaduke. "What thinkest thou of the damozel?"

"Marry," answered Alwyn, thoughtfully, "I pity and marvel at her. There is eno' in her to furnish forth twenty court beauties. But what good can so much wit and cunning do to an honest maiden?"

"That is exactly my own thought," said Marmaduke; and both the young men sunk into silence, till Sibyll re-entered with her father.

To the surprise of Marmaduke, Nicholas Alwyn, whose less gallant manner he was inclined to ridicule, soon contrived to rouse their host from his lethargy, and to absorb all the notice of Sibyll; and the surprise was increased, when he saw that his friend appeared not unfamiliar with those abstruse and mystical sciences in which Adam was engaged.

"What!" said Adam. "You know, then, my deft and worthy friend, Master Caxton! He hath seen notable things abroad——"

"Which, he more than hints," said Nicholas, "will lower the value of those manuscripts this fair damozel has so couthly enriched: and that he hopes, ere long, to show the Englishers how to make fifty, a hundred, —nay, even five hundred exemplars of the choicest

book, in a much shorter time than a scribe would take in writing out two or three score pages in a single copy."

"Verily," said Marmaduke, with a smile of compassion, "the poor man must be somewhat demented; for I opine that the value of such curiosities must be in their rarity—and who would care for a book, if five hundred others had precisely the same?—allowing always, good Nicholas, for thy friend's vaunting and over-crowing. Five hundred! By'r lady, there would be scarcely five hundred fools in merry England to waste good nobles on spoilt rags, specially while bows and mail are so dear."

"Young gentleman," said Adam, rebukingly, "meseemeth that thou wrongest our age and country, to the which, if we have but peace and freedom, I trust the birth of great discoveries is ordained. Certes, Master Alwyn," he added, turning to the goldsmith, "this achievement may be readily performed, and hath existed, I heard an ingenious Fleming say, years ago, for many ages amongst a strange people * known to the Venetians! But dost thou think there is much appetite among those who govern the state to lend encouragement to such matters?"

"My master serves my Lord Hastings, the King's chamberlain, and my lord has often been pleased to converse with me, so that I venture to say, from my knowledge of his affection to all excellent craft and lere, that whatever will tend to make men wiser will have his countenance and favour with the king."

"That is it—that is it!" exclaimed Adam, rubbing his hands. "My invention shall not die!"

"And that invention——"

* Query, the Chinese?

"Is one that will multiply exemplars of books without hands; works of craft without 'prentice or journeyman; will move waggons and litters without horses; will direct ships without sails; will—but, alack! it is not yet complete, and, for want of means, it never may be."

Sibyll still kept her animated countenance fixed on Alwyn, whose intelligence she had already detected, and was charmed with the profound attention with which he listened. But her eye glancing from his sharp features to the handsome, honest face of the Nevile, the contrast was so forcible, that she could not restrain her laughter, though, the moment after, a keen pang shot through her heart. The worthy Marmaduke had been in the act of conveying his cup to his lips—the cup stood arrested midway, his jaws dropped, his eyes opened to their widest extent, an expression of the most evident consternation and dismay spoke in every feature, and, when he heard the merry laugh of Sibyll, he pushed his stool from her as far as he well could, and surveyed her with a look of mingled fear and pity.

"Alas! thou art sure my poor father is a wizard now?"

"Pardie!" answered the Nevile. "Hath he not said so? Hath he not spoken of waggons without horses—ships without sails? And is not all this what every dissour and jongleur tells us of in his stories of Merlin? Gentle maiden," he added earnestly, drawing nearer to her, and whispering in a voice of much simple pathos—"thou art young, and I owe thee much. Take care of thyself. Such wonders and derring-do are too solemn for laughter."

"Ah!" answered Sibyll, rising, "I fear they are.

How can I expect the people to be wiser than thou, or their hard natures kinder in their judgment than thy kind heart?" Her low and melancholy voice went to the heart thus appealed to. Marmaduke also rose, and followed her into the parlour, or withdrawing-closet, while Adam and the goldsmith continued to converse (though Alwyn's eye followed the young hostess), the former appearing perfectly unconscious of the secession of his other listeners. But Alwyn's attention occasionally wandered, and he soon contrived to draw his host into the parlour.

When Nicholas rose, at last, to depart, he beckoned Sibyll aside; "Fair mistress," said he, with some awkward hesitation, "forgive a plain, blunt tongue; but ye of the better birth are not always above aid, even from such as I am. If you would sell these blazoned manuscripts, I can not only obtain you a noble purchaser, in my Lord Scales, or in my Lord Hastings, an equally ripe scholar, but it may be the means of my procuring a suitable patron for your father, and, in these times, the scholar must creep under the knight's manteline."

"Master Alwyn," said Sibyll, suppressing her tears, "it was for my father's sake that these labours were wrought. We are poor and friendless. Take the manuscripts, and sell them as thou wilt, and God and St. Mary requite thee!"

"Your father is a great man," said Alwyn, after a pause.

"But were he to walk the streets, they would stone him," replied Sibyll, with a quiet bitterness.

Here the Nevile, carefully shunning the magician, who, in the nervous excitement produced by the conversation of a mind less uncongenial than he had en-

countered for many years, seemed about to address him—here, I say, the Nevile chimed in—"Hast thou no weapon but thy bludgeon? Dear foster-brother, I fear for thy safety."

"Nay, robbers rarely attack us mechanical folk; and I know my way better than thou. I shall find a boat near York House, so pleasant night and quick cure to thee, honoured foster-brother. I will send the tailor and other craftsmen to-morrow."

"And at the same time," whispered Marmaduke, accompanying his friend to the door, "send me a breviary, just to patter an ave or so. This grey-haired carle puts my heart in a tremble. Moreover, buy me a gittern—a brave one—for the damozel. She is too proud to take money, and, 'fore heaven, I have small doubts the old wizard could turn my hose into nobles an' he had a mind for such gear. Waggons without horses—ships without sails, quotha!"

As soon as Alwyn had departed, Madge appeared with the final refreshment, called "the Wines," consisting of spiced hippocras and confections, of the former of which the Nevile partook in solemn silence.

CHAPTER VII

THERE IS A ROD FOR THE BACK OF EVERY FOOL WHO WOULD BE WISER THAN HIS GENERATION

The next morning, when Marmaduke descended to the hall, Madge, accosting him on the threshold, informed him that Mistress Sibyll was unwell, and kept her chamber, and that Master Warner was never visible much before noon. He was, therefore, prayed to take his meal alone. "Alone" was a word peculiarly

unwelcome to Marmaduke Nevile, who was an animal thoroughly social and gregarious. He managed, therefore, to detain the old servant, who, besides the liking a skilful leech naturally takes to a thriving patient, had enough of her sex about her to be pleased with a comely face and a frank, good-humoured voice. Moreover, Marmaduke, wishing to satisfy his curiosity, turned the conversation upon Warner and Sibyll, a theme upon which the old woman was well disposed to be garrulous. He soon learned the poverty of the mansion and the sacrifice of the gittern; and his generosity and compassion were busily engaged in devising some means to requite the hospitality he had received, without wounding the pride of his host, when the arrival of his mails, together with the visits of the tailor and mercer, sent to him by Alwyn, diverted his thoughts into a new channel.

Between the comparative merits of gowns and surcoats, broad-toed shoes and pointed, some time was disposed of with much cheerfulness and edification; but when his visitors had retired, the benevolent mind of the young guest again recurred to the penury of his host. Placing his marks before him on the table in the little withdrawing parlour, he began counting them over, and putting aside the sum he meditated devoting to Warner's relief. "But how," he muttered, "how to get him to take the gold. I know, by myself, what a gentleman and a knight's son must feel at the proffer of alms—pardie! I would as lief Alwyn had struck me as offered me his gipsire—the ill-mannered, affectionate fellow! I must think—I must think——"

And while still thinking, the door softly opened, and Warner himself, in a high state of abstraction and reverie, stalked noiselessly into the room, on his way

to the garden, in which, when musing over some new spring for his invention, he was wont to peripatise. The sight of the gold on the table struck full on the philosopher's eyes, and waked him at once from his reverie. That gold—oh what precious instruments, what learned manuscripts it could purchase! That gold, it was the breath of life to his model! He walked deliberately up to the table, and laid his hand upon one of the little heaps. Marmaduke drew back his stool, and stared at him with open mouth.

"Young man, what wantest thou with all this gold?" said Adam, in a petulant, reproachful tone. "Put it up—put it up! Never let the poor see gold; it tempts them, sir—it tempts them." And so saying, the student abruptly turned away his eyes, and moved towards the garden.

Marmaduke rose and put himself in Adam's way—

"Honoured sir," said the young man, "you say justly—what want I with all this gold? The only gold a young man should covet is eno' to suffice for the knight's spurs to his heels. If, without offence, you would—that is—ehem!—I mean, gramercy! I shall never say it, but I believe my father owed your father four marks, and he bade me repay them. Here, sir!" He held out the glittering coins—the philosopher's hand closed on them as the fish's maw closes on the bait. Adam burst into a laugh, that sounded strangely weird and unearthly upon Marmaduke's startled ear.

"All this for me!" he exclaimed. "For me! No, no! not for *me*, for IT—I take it—I take it, sir! I will pay it back with large usury. Come to me this day year, when this world will be a new world, and Adam Warner will be—ha! ha! Kind Heaven, I

thank thee!" Suddenly turning away, the philosopher strode through the hall, opened the front door, and escaped into the street.

"By'r Lady!" said Marmaduke, slowly recovering his surprise. "I need not have been so much at a loss; the old gentleman takes to my gold as kindly as if it were mother's milk. 'Fore heaven, mine host's laugh is a ghastly thing!" So soliloquising, he prudently put up the rest of his money, and locked his mails.

As time went on, the young man became exceedingly weary of his own company. Sibyll still withheld her appearance: the gloom of the old hall, the uncultivated sadness of the lonely garden, preyed upon his spirits. At length, impatient to get a view of the world without, he mounted a high stool in the hall, and so contrived to enjoy the prospect, which the unglazed wicker lattice, deep set in the wall, afforded. But the scene without was little more animated than that within—all was so deserted in the neighbourhood! —the shops mean and scattered—the thoroughfare almost desolate. At last he heard a shout, or rather hoot, at a distance; and, turning his attention whence it proceeded, he beheld a figure emerge from an alley opposite the casement, with a sack under one arm, and several books heaped under the other. At his heels followed a train of ragged boys, shouting and hallooing, "The wizard! the wizard!—Ah!—Bah!—The old devil's-kin!" At this cry the dull neighbourhood seemed suddenly to burst forth into life. From the casements and thresholds of every house curious faces emerged, and many voices of men and women joined, in deeper bass, with the shrill tenor of the choral urchins, "The wizard! the wizard!—out at daylight!"

The person thus stigmatised, as he approached the house, turned his face, with an expression of wistful perplexity, from side to side. His lips moved convulsively, and his face was very pale, but he spoke not. And now, the children seeing him near his refuge, became more outrageous. They placed themselves menacingly before him—they pulled his robe—they even struck at him—and one, bolder than the rest, jumped up, and plucked his beard. At this last insult, Adam Warner, for it was he, broke silence; but such was the sweetness of his disposition, that it was rather with pity than reproof in his voice, that he said—

"Fie, little one!—I fear me thine own age will have small honour if thou thus mockest mature years in me."

This gentleness only served to increase the audacity of his persecutors, who now, momentarily augmenting, presented a formidable obstacle to his further progress. Perceiving that he could not advance, without offensive measures on his own part, the poor scholar halted; and looking at the crowd with mild dignity, he asked, "What means this, my children? How have I injured you?"

"The wizard—the wizard!" was the only answer he received.

Adam shrugged his shoulders, and strode on with so sudden a step, that one of the smaller children, a curly-headed laughing rogue, of about eight years old, was thrown down at his feet, and the rest gave way. But the poor man, seeing one of his foes thus fallen, instead of pursuing his victory, again paused, and forgetful of the precious burdens he carried, let drop the sack and books, and took up the child in his arms. On seeing their companion in the embrace of the wiz-

ard, a simultaneous cry of horror broke from the assemblage.—"He is going to curse poor Tim!"

"My child!—my boy!" shrieked a woman, from one of the casements—"let go my child!"

On his part, the boy kicked and shrieked lustily, as Adam, bending his noble face tenderly over him, said, "Thou art not hurt, child. Poor boy! thinkest thou I would harm thee?" While he spoke a storm of missiles—mud, dirt, sticks, bricks, stones,—from the enemy, that had now fallen back in the rear, burst upon him. A stone struck him on the shoulder. Then his face changed—an angry gleam shot from his deep, calm eyes—he put down the child—and, turning steadily to the grown people at the windows, said, "Ye train your children ill"—picked up his sack and books—sighed, as he saw the latter stained by the mire, which he wiped with his long sleeve, and too proud to show fear, slowly made for his door. Fortunately Sibyll had heard the clamour, and was ready to admit her father, and close her door upon the rush which instantaneously followed his escape. The baffled rout set up a yell of wrath, and the boys were now joined by several foes more formidable from the adjacent houses: assured in their own minds that some terrible execration had been pronounced upon the limbs and body of Master Tim, who still continued bellowing and howling, probably from the excitement of finding himself raised to the dignity of a martyr,—the pious neighbours poured forth, with oaths, and curses, and such weapons as they could seize in haste, to storm the wizard's fortress.

From his casement Marmaduke Nevile had espied all that had hitherto passed, and though indignant at the brutality of the persecutors, he had thought it by

no means unnatural. "If men, gentlemen born, will read uncanny books, and resolve to be wizards, why they must reap what they sow," was the logical reflection that passed through the mind of that ingenuous youth; but when he now perceived the arrival of more important allies—when stones began to fly through the wicker lattices—when threats of setting fire to the house and burning the sorcerer, who muttered spells over innocent little boys, were heard, seriously increasing in depth and loudness—Marmaduke felt his chivalry called forth, and, with some difficulty, opening the rusty wicket in the casement, he exclaimed, "Shame on you, my countrymen, for thus disturbing, in broad day, a peaceful habitation! Ye call mine host a wizard. Thus much say I on his behalf: I was robbed and wounded a few nights since in your neighbourhood, and in this house alone I found shelter and healing."

The unexpected sight of the fair young face of Marmaduke Nevile, and the healthful sound of his clear ringing voice, produced a momentary effect on the besiegers, when one of them, a sturdy baker, cried out, "Heed him not—he is a goblin! Those devil-mongers can bake ye a dozen such every moment, as deftly as I can draw loaves from the oven!"

This speech turned the tide, and at that instant a savage-looking man, the father of the aggrieved boy, followed by his wife, gesticulating and weeping, ran from his house, waving a torch in his right hand, his arm bare to the shoulder, and the cry of "Fire the door!" was universal.

In fact, the danger now grew imminent: several of the party were already piling straw and fagots against the threshold, and Marmaduke began to think the only

chance of life to his host and Sibyll was in flight by some back way, when he beheld a man, clad somewhat in the fashion of a country yeoman, a formidable knotted club in his hand, pushing his way, with Herculean shoulders, through the crowd, and stationing himself before the threshold and brandishing aloft his formidable weapon, he exclaimed, "What! In the devil's name, do you mean to get yourselves all hanged for riot? Do you think King Edward is as soft a man as King Henry was, and that he will suffer any one but himself to set fire to people's houses in this way? I dare say you are all right enough on the main, but by the blood of St. Thomas, I will brain the first man who advances a step,—by way of preserving the necks of the rest!"

"A Robin! a Robin!" cried several of the mob. "It is our good friend Robin. Hearken to Robin. He is always right!"

"Ay, that I am!" quoth the defender; "you know that well enough. If I had my way, the world should be turned upside down, but what the poor folk should get nearer to the sun! But what I say is this, never go against law, while the law is too strong. And it were a sad thing to see fifty fine fellows trussed up for burning an old wizard. So, be off with you, and let us, at least all that can afford it, make for Master Sancroft's hostelrie, and talk soberly over our ale. For little, I trow, will ye work now your blood's up."

This address was received with a shout of approbation. The father of the injured child set his broad foot on his torch, the baker chucked up his white cap, the ragged boys yelled out, "A Robin! a Robin!" and in less than two minutes the place was as empty as it had been before the appearance of the scholar. Mar-

maduke, who, though so ignorant of books, was acute and penetrating in all matters of action, could not help admiring the address and dexterity of the club-bearer: and the danger being now over, withdrew from the casement, in search of the inmates of the house. Ascending the stairs, he found on the landing-place, near his room, and by the embrasure of a huge casement which jutted from the wall, Adam and his daughter. Adam was leaning against the wall, with his arms folded, and Sibyll, hanging upon him, was uttering the softest and most soothing words of comfort her tenderness could suggest.

"My child," said the old man, shaking his head sadly, "I shall never again have heart for these studies —never. A king's anger I could brave, a priest's malice I could pity—but to find the very children, the young race, for whose sake I have made thee and myself paupers, to find them thus—thus——" He stopped, for his voice failed him, and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Come and speak comfort to my father, Master Nevile!" exclaimed Sibyll, "come and tell him that whoever is above the herd, whether knight or scholar, must learn to despise the hootings that follow Merit. Father, father, they threw mud and stones at thy king as he passed through the streets of London. Thou art not the only one whom this base world misjudges."

"Worthy mine host!" said Marmaduke, thus appealed to: "Algates, it were not speaking truth to tell thee that I think a gentleman of birth and quality should walk the thoroughfares with a bundle of books under his arm, yet as for the raptril vulgar, the hildings and cullions who hiss one day what they applaud the next, I hold it the duty of every Christian and well-

born man to regard them as the dirt on the crossings. Brave soldiers term it no disgrace to receive a blow from a base hind. An' it had been knights and gentles who had insulted thee, thou mightest have cause for shame. But a mob of lewd rascallions and squalling infants—bah! verily, it is mere matter for scorn and laughter."

These philosophical propositions and distinctions did not seem to have their due effect upon Adam. He smiled, however, gently upon his guest, and with a blush over his pale face, said, "I am rightly chastised, good young man; mean was I, methinks, and sordid to take from thee thy good gold. But thou knowest not what fever burns in the brain of a man who feels that, had he wealth, his knowledge could do great things,—such things!—I thought to repay thee well. Now the frenzy is gone, and I, who an hour agone esteemed myself a puissant sage, sink in mine own conceit to a miserable blinded fool. Child, I am very weak; I will lay me down and rest."

So saying the poor philosopher went his way to his chamber, leaning on his daughter's arm.

In a few minutes Sibyll rejoined Marmaduke, who had returned to the hall, and informed him that her father had lain down a while to compose himself.

"It is a hard fate, sir," said the girl, with a faint smile; "a hard fate, to be banned and accursed by the world, only because one has sought to be wiser than the world is."

"Douce maiden," returned the Nevile; "it is happy for thee that thy sex forbids thee to follow thy father's footsteps, or I should say his hard fate were thy fair warning."

Sibyll smiled faintly, and after a pause, said, with a deep blush:—

"You have been generous to my father; do not misjudge him. He would give his last groat to a starving beggar. But when his passion of scholar and inventor masters him—thou mightest think him worse than miser. It is an over-noble yearning that ofttimes makes him mean."

"Nay," answered Marmaduke, touched by the heavy sigh and swimming eyes with which the last words were spoken; "I have heard Nick Alwyn's uncle, who was a learned monk, declare that he could not constrain himself to pray to be delivered from temptation —seeing that he might thereby lose an occasion for filching some notable book! For the rest," he added, "you forget how much I owe to Master Warner's hospitality."

He took her hand with a frank and brotherly gallantry as he spoke; but the touch of that small, soft hand, freely and innocently resigned to him, sent a thrill to his heart—and again the face of Sibyll seemed to him wondrous fair.

There was a long silence, which Sibyll was the first to break. She turned the conversation once more upon Marmaduke's views in life. It had been easy for a deeper observer than he was, to see that, under all that young girl's simplicity and sweetness, there lurked something of dangerous ambition. She loved to recall the court-life her childhood had known, though her youth had resigned it with apparent cheerfulness. Like many who are poor and fallen, Sibyll built herself a sad consolation out of her pride; she never forgot that she was well-born. But Marmaduke, in what was ambition, saw but interest in himself, and his heart beat more quickly as he bent his eyes upon that downcast, thoughtful, earnest countenance.

After an hour thus passed, Sibyll left the guest, and remounted to her father's chamber. She found Adam pacing the narrow floor, and muttering to himself. He turned abruptly as she entered, and said, "Come hither, child—I took four marks from that young man, for I wanted books and instruments, and there are two left;—see—take them back to him."

"My father, he will not receive them. Fear not, thou shalt repay him some day."

"Take them, I say, and if the young man says thee nay, why, buy thyself gauds and gear, or let us eat, and drink, and laugh. What else is life made for? Ha! ha! Laugh, child, laugh!"

There was something strangely pathetic in this outburst, this terrible mirth, born of profound dejection. Alas for this guileless, simple creature, who had clutched at gold with a huckster's eagerness—who, forgetting the wants of his own child, had employed it upon the service of an Abstract Thought, and whom the scorn of his kind now pierced through all the folds of his close-webbed philosophy and self-forgetful genius. Awful is the duel between MAN and THE AGE in which he lives! For the gain of posterity, Adam Warner had martyrised existence,—and the children pelted him as he passed the streets! Sibyll burst into tears.

"No, my father, no," she sobbed, pushing back the money into his hands. "Let us both starve, rather than you should despond. God and man will bring you justice yet."

"Ah!" said the baffled enthusiast, "my whole mind is one sore now. I feel as if I could love man no more. Go, and leave me. Go, I say!" and the poor student, usually so mild and gall-less, stamped his foot in im-

potent rage. Sibyll, weeping as if her heart would break, left him.

Then Adam Warner again paced to and fro restlessly, and again muttered to himself for several minutes. At last he approached his Model—the model of a mighty and stupendous invention—the fruit of no chimerical and visionary science—a great Promethean THING, that, once matured, would divide the Old World from the New, enter into all operations of Labour, animate all the future affairs, colour all the practical doctrines of active men. He paused before it, and addressed it as if it heard and understood him—"My hair was dark, and my tread was firm, when, one night, a THOUGHT passed into my soul—a thought to make Matter the gigantic slave of Mind. Out of this thought, thou, not yet born after five-and-twenty years of travail, wert conceived. My coffers were then full, and my name was honoured; and the rich respected, and the poor loved, me. Art thou a devil, that has tempted me to ruin, or a god, that has lifted me above the earth? I am old before my time, my hair is blanched, my frame is bowed, my wealth is gone, my name is sullied. And all, dumb idol of Iron, and the Element, all for thee! I had a wife whom I adored—she died—I forgot her loss in the hope of *thy* life. I have a child still—God and our Lady forgive me—she is less dear to me than thou hast been. And now"—the old man ceased abruptly, and folding his arms, looked at the deaf iron sternly, as on a human foe. By his side was a huge hammer, employed in the toils of his forge; suddenly he seized and swung it aloft. One blow, and the labour of years was shattered into pieces! One blow!—But the heart failed him, and the hammer fell heavily to the ground.

"Ay!" he muttered, "true—true! if thou, who hast destroyed all else, wert destroyed too, what were left me? Is it a crime to murder Man?—a greater crime to murder Thought, which is the life of all men. Come—I forgive thee!"

And all that day and all that night the Enthusiast laboured in his chamber, and the next day the remembrance of the hootings, the pelting, the mob, was gone—clean gone from his breast. The Model began to move—life hovered over its wheels; and the Martyr of Science had forgotten the very world for which he, groaning and rejoicing, toiled!

CHAPTER VIII

MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE MAKES LOVE AND IS FRIGHTENED

For two or three days, Marmaduke and Sibyll were necessarily brought much together. Such familiarity of intercourse was peculiarly rare in that time, when, except perhaps in the dissolute court of Edward IV., the virgins of gentle birth mixed sparingly, and with great reserve, amongst those of opposite sex. Marmaduke, rapidly recovering from the effect of his wounds, and without other resource than Sibyll's society, in the solitude of his confinement, was not proof against the temptation which one so young and so sweetly winning brought to his fancy or his senses. The poor Sibyll—she was no faultless paragon—she was a rare and singular mixture of many opposite qualities in heart and in intellect! She was one moment infantine in simplicity and gay playfulness—the next, a shade passed over her bright face, and she ut-

tered some sentence of that bitter and chilling wisdom, which the sense of persecution, the cruelty of the world, had already taught her. She was, indeed, at that age when the Child and the Woman are struggling against each other. Her character was not yet formed—a little happiness would have ripened it at once into the richest bloom of goodness. But sorrow, that ever sharpens the intellect, might only serve to sour the heart. Her mind was so innately chaste and pure, that she knew not the nature of the admiration she excited. But the admiration pleased her as it pleases some young child—she was vain then, but it was an infant's vanity, not a woman's. And thus, from innocence itself, there was a fearlessness, a freedom, a something endearing and familiar in her manner, which might have turned a wiser head than Marmaduke Nevile's. And this the more, because, while liking her young guest, confiding in him, raised in her own esteem by his gallantry, enjoying that intercourse of youth with youth, so unfamiliar to her, and surrendering herself the more to its charm from the joy that animated her spirits, in seeing that her father had forgotten his humiliation, and returned to his wonted labours—she yet knew not for the handsome Nevile one sentiment that approached to love. Her mind was so superior to his own, that she felt almost as if older in years, and in their talk, her rosy lips preached to him in grave advice.

On the landing, by Marmaduke's chamber, there was a large oriel casement jutting from the wall. It was only glazed at the upper part, and that most imperfectly, the lower part being closed at night, or in inclement weather, with rude shutters. The recess formed by this comfortless casement answered, there-

fore, the purpose of a balcony; it commanded a full view of the vicinity without, and gave to those who might be passing by, the power also of indulging their own curiosity by a view of the interior.

Whenever he lost sight of Sibyll, and had grown weary of the peacock, this spot was Marmaduke's favourite haunt. It diverted him, poor youth, to look out of the window upon the livelier world beyond. The place, it is true, was ordinarily deserted, but still the spires and turrets of London were always discernible—and they were something.

Accordingly, in this embrasure stood Marmaduke, when one morning, Sibyll, coming from her father's room, joined him.

"And what, Master Nevile," said Sibyll, with a malicious yet charming smile, "what claimed thy meditations? Some misgiving as to the trimming of thy tunic, or the length of thy shoon?"

"Nay," returned Marmaduke, gravely, "such thoughts, though not without their importance in the mind of a gentleman, who would not that his ignorance of court delicacies should commit him to the japes of his equals, were not at that moment uppermost. I was thinking——"

"Of those mastiffs, quarrelling for a bone. Avow it."

"By our Lady I saw them not, but now I look, they are brave dogs. Ha!—seest thou how gallantly each fronts the other, the hair bristling, the eyes fixed, the tail on end, the fangs glistening. Now the lesser one moves slowly round and round the bigger, who, mind you, Mistress Sibyll, is no dullard, but moves, too, quick as thought, not to be taken unawares. Ha! that is a brave spring! Heigh, dogs, heigh! a good

sight—it makes the blood warm!—the little one hath him by the throat!"

"Alack," said Sibyll, turning away her eyes, "can you find pleasure in seeing two poor brutes mangle each other for a bone?"

"By St. Dunstan! doth it matter what may be the cause of quarrel, so long as dog or man bears himself bravely, with a due sense of honour and derring-do. See! the big one is up again. Ah! foul fall the butcher, who drives them away. Those seely mechanics know not the joyaunce of fair fighting to gentle and to hound. For a hound, mark you, hath nothing mechanical in his nature. He is a gentleman all over—brave against equal and stranger, forbearing to the small and defenceless, true in poverty and need where he loveth, stern and ruthless where he hateth, and despising thieves, hildings, and the vulgar, as much as e'er a gold spur in King Edward's court! Oh! certes, your best gentleman is the best hound!"

"You moralise to-day. And I know not how to gainsay you," returned Sibyll, as the dogs, reluctantly beaten off, retired each from each, snarling and reluctant, while a small black cur, that had hitherto sat unobserved at the door of a small hostelrie, now coolly approached and dragged off the bone of contention. "But what say'st thou now? See! see! the patient mongrel carries off the bone from the gentlemen-hounds. Is that the way of the world?"

"Pardie! it is a naught world, if so, and much changed from the time of our fathers, the Normans. But these Saxons are getting uppermost again, and the yard measure, I fear me, is more potent in these holiday times than the mace or the battle-axe." The Nevile paused, sighed, and changed the subject:

"This house of thine must have been a stately pile in its day. I see but one side of the quadrangle is left, though it be easy to trace where the other three have stood."

"And you may see their stones and their fittings in the butcher's and baker's stalls over the way," replied Sibyll.

"Ay!" said the Nevile, "the parings of the gentry begin to be the wealth of the varlets."

"Little ought we to pine at that," returned Sibyll, "if the varlets were but gentle with our poverty; but they loathe the humbled fortunes on which they rise, and while slaves to the rich, are tyrants to the poor."

This was said so sadly, that the Nevile felt his eyes overflow; and the humble dress of the girl, the melancholy ridges which evinced the site of a noble house, now shrunk into a dismal ruin, the remembrance of the pastime-ground, the insults of the crowd, and the broken gittern, all conspired to move his compassion, and to give force to yet more tender emotions.

"Ah!" he said, suddenly, and with a quick faint blush over his handsome and manly countenance—"ah, fair maid—fair Sibyll!—God grant that I may win something of gold and fortune amidst yonder towers, on which the sun shines so cheerly. God grant it, not for my sake—not for mine; but that I may have something besides a true heart and a stainless name to lay at thy feet. Oh, Sibyll! By this hand—by my father's soul—I love thee, Sibyll! Have I not said it before? Well, hear me now—I love thee!"

As he spoke, he clasped her hand in his own, and she suffered it for one instant to rest in his. Then withdrawing it, and meeting his enamoured eyes, with a strange sadness in her own darker, deeper, and more intelligent orbs, she said—

"I thank thee—thank thee for the honour of such kind thoughts; and frankly I answer, as thou hast frankly spoken. It was sweet to me, who have known little in life not hard and bitter—sweet to wish I had a brother like thee, and, as a brother, I can love and pray for thee. But ask not more, Marmaduke. I have aims in life which forbid all other love!"

"Art thou too aspiring for one who has his spurs to win?"

"Not so; but listen. My mother's lessons and my own heart have made my poor father the first end and object of all things on earth to me. I live to protect him, work for him, honour him—and for the rest—I have thoughts thou canst not know—an ambition thou canst not feel. Nay," she added, with that delightful smile which chased away the graver thought which had before saddened her aspect, "what would thy sober friend Master Alwyn say to thee, if he heard thou hadst courted the wizard's daughter?"

"By my faith," exclaimed Marmaduke, "thou art a very April—smiles and clouds in a breath! If what thou despisest in me be my want of bookcraft, and suchlike, by my halidame I will turn scholar for thy sake; and——"

Here, as he had again taken Sibyll's hand, with the passionate ardour of his bold nature, not to be lightly daunted by a maiden's first "No," a sudden shrill, wild burst of laughter, accompanied with a gusty fit of unmelodious music from the street below, made both maiden and youth start, and turn their eyes: there, weaving their immodest dance, tawdry in their tinsel attire, their naked arms glancing above their heads, as they waved on high their instruments, went the timbrel-girls.

"Ha! ha!" cried their leader, "see the gallant and the witch-leman! The glamour has done its work! Foul is fair!—foul is fair! and the devil will have his own!"

But these creatures, whose bold licence the ancient chronicler records, were rarely seen alone. They haunted parties of pomp and pleasure; they linked together the extremes of life—the grotesque Chorus that introduced the terrible truth of foul vice, and abandoned wretchedness in the midst of the world's holiday and pageant. So now, as they wheeled into the silent, squalid street, they heralded a goodly company of dames and cavaliers, on horseback, who were passing through the neighbouring plains into the park of Marybone to enjoy the sport of falconry. The splendid dresses of this procession, and the grave and measured dignity with which it swept along, contrasted forcibly with the wild movements and disorderly mirth of the timbrel players. These last darted round and round the riders, holding out their instruments for largess, and retorting, with laugh and gibe, the disdainful look or sharp rebuke with which their salutations were mostly received.

Suddenly, as the company, two by two, paced up the street, Sibyll uttered a faint exclamation, and strove to snatch her hand from the Nevile's grasp. Her eye rested upon one of the horsemen who rode last, and who seemed in earnest conversation with a dame, who, though scarcely in her first youth, excelled all her fair companions in beauty of face and grace of horsemanship, as well as in the costly equipments of the white barb that caracolled beneath her easy hand. At the same moment the horseman looked up and gazed steadily at Sibyll, whose countenance grew pale, and

flushed, in a breath. His eye then glanced rapidly at Marmaduke—a half-smile passed his pale, firm lips; he slightly raised the plumed cap from his brow—inclined gravely to Sibyll—and, turning once more to his companion, appeared to answer some question she addressed to him, as to the object of his salutation, for her look, which was proud, keen, and lofty, was raised to Sibyll, and then dropped somewhat disdainfully, as she listened to the words addressed her by the cavalier.

The lynx eyes of the *tymbesteres* had seen the recognition; and their leader, laying her bold hand on the embossed bridle of the horseman, exclaimed, in a voice shrill and loud enough to be heard in the balcony above, "Largess! noble lord, largess! for the sake of the lady thou lovest best!"

The fair equestrian turned away her head at these words, the nobleman watched her a moment, and dropped some coins into the timbrel.

"Ha! ha!" cried the *tymbestere*, pointing her long arm to Sibyll, and springing towards the balcony—

"The cushat would mate
Above her state,
And she flutters her wings round the falcon's beak;
But death to the dove
Is the falcon's love—
Oh, sharp is the kiss of the falcon's beak!"

Before this rude song was ended, Sibyll had vanished from the place; the cavalcade had disappeared. The timbrel-players, without deigning to notice Marmaduke, darted elsewhere to ply their discordant trade, and the Nevile, crossing himself devoutly, muttered, "Jesu defend us! Those she Will-o'-the-wisps are eno' to scare all the blood out of one's body. What—

a murrain on them!—do they portend, flitting round and round, and skirting off, as if the devil's broomstick was behind them! By the mass! they have frighted away the damozel, and I am not sorry for it. They have left me small heart for the part of Sir Launval."

His meditations were broken off by the sudden sight of Nicholas Alwyn, mounted on a small palfrey, and followed by a sturdy groom on horseback, leading a steed handsomely caparisoned. In another moment, Marmaduke had descended—opened the door—and drawn Alwyn into the hall.

CHAPTER IX

MASTER MARMADUKE NEVILE LEAVES THE WIZARD'S HOUSE FOR THE GREAT WORLD

"Right glad am I," said Nicholas, "to see you so stout and hearty, for I am the bearer of good news. Though I have been away, I have not forgotten you; and it so chanced that I went yesterday to attend my Lord of Warwick with some nowches* and knackeries, that he takes out as gifts and exemplars of English work. They were indifferently well wrought, specially a chevesail, of which the——"

"Spare me the fashion of thy mechanicals, and come to the point," interrupted Marmaduke, impatiently.

"Pardon me, Master Nevile. I interrupt thee not when thou talkest of bassinets and hauberks—every cobbler to his last. But, as thou sayest, to the point: the stout earl, while scanning my workmanship, for in much the chevesail was mine, was pleased to speak

* Nowches—buckles and other ornaments.

graciously of my skill with the bow, of which he had heard; and he then turned to thyself, of whom my Lord Montagu had already made disparaging mention: when I told the earl somewhat more about thy qualities and disposings; and when I spoke of thy desire to serve him, and the letter of which thou art the bearer, his black brows smoothed mighty graciously, and he bade me tell thee to come to him this afternoon, and he would judge of thee with his own eyes and ears. Wherefore I have ordered the craftsmen to have all thy gauds and gear ready at thine hostelrie, and I have engaged thee henchmen and horses for thy fitting appearance. Be quick: time and the great wait for no man. So take whatever thou needest for present want, from thy mails, and I will send a porter for the rest ere sunset."

"But the gittern for the damozel?"

"I have provided that for thee, as is meet." And Nicholas, stepping back, eased the groom of a case which contained a gittern, whose workmanship and ornaments delighted the Nevile.

"It is of my lord the young duke of Gloucester's own musical-vendor; and the duke, though a lad yet, is a notable judge of all appertaining to the gentle craft.* So despatch, and away!"

Marmaduke retired to his chamber, and Nicholas, after a moment spent in silent thought, searched the room for the hand-bell, which then made the mode of communication between the master and domestics. Not finding this necessary luxury, he contrived at last to make Madge hear his voice from her subterranean retreat; and, on her arrival, sent her in quest of Sibyll.

* For Richard III.'s love of music, and patronage of musicians and minstrels, see the discriminating character of that prince in Sharon Turner's "History of England," vol. iv. p. 66.

The answer he received was, that Mistress Sibyll was ill, and unable to see him. Alwyn looked disconcerted at this intelligence, but, drawing from his girdle a small gipsire, richly broidered, he prayed Madge to deliver it to her young mistress, and inform her that it was the fruit of the commission with which she had honoured him.

"It is passing strange," said he, pacing the hall alone—"passing strange, that the poor child should have taken such hold on me. After all, she would be a bad wife for a plain man like me. Tush! that is the trader's thought all over. Have I brought no fresher feeling out of my fair village-green? Would it not be sweet to work for her, and rise in life, with her by my side? And these girls of the city—so prim and so brainless!—as well marry a painted puppet. Sibyll! Am I dement? Stark wode? What have I to do with girls and marriage? Hump! I marvel what Marmaduke still thinks of her—and she of him."

While Alwyn thus soliloquised, the Nevile having hastily arranged his dress, and laden himself with the moneys his mails contained, summoned old Madge to receive his largess, and to conduct him to Warner's chamber, in order to proffer his farewell.

With somewhat of a timid step he followed the old woman (who kept muttering thanks and benedicites, as she eyed the coin in her palm) up the rugged stairs, —and for the first time knocked at the door of the student's sanctuary. No answer came. "Eh, sir! you must enter," said Madge; "an' you fired a bombard under his ear he would not heed you." So, suiting the action to the word, she threw open the door, and closed it behind him, as Marmaduke entered.

The room was filled with smoke, through which

mirky atmosphere the clear red light of the burning charcoal peered out steadily like a Cyclop's eye. A small, but heaving, regular, labouring, continuous sound, as of a fairy hammer, smote the young man's ear. But, as his gaze, accustoming itself to the atmosphere, searched around, he could not perceive what was its cause. Adam Warner was standing in the middle of the room, his arms folded, and contemplating something at a little distance, which Marmaduke could not accurately distinguish. The youth took courage, and approached. "Honoured mine host," said he, "I thank thee for hospitality and kindness, I crave pardon for disturbing thee in thy incanta—ehem!—thy—thy studies, and I come to bid thee farewell."

Adam turned round with a puzzled, absent air, as if scarcely recognising his guest; at length, as his recollection slowly came back to him, he smiled graciously, and said: "Good youth, thou art richly welcome to what little it was in my power to do for thee. Peradventure, a time may come when they who seek the roof of Adam Warner may find less homely cheer—a less rugged habitation—for look you!" he exclaimed, suddenly, with a burst of irrepressible enthusiasm—and laying his hand on Nevile's arm, as, through all the smoke and grime that obscured his face, flashed the ardent soul of the triumphant Inventor, "look you! since you have been in this house, one of my great objects is well-nigh matured—achieved. Come hither," and he dragged the wondering Marmaduke to his model, or Eureka, as Adam had fondly named his contrivance. The Nevile then perceived that it was from the interior of this machine that the sound which had startled him, arose; to his eye the THING was un-

couth and hideous; from the jaws of an iron serpent, that, wreathing round it, rose on high with erect crest, gushed a rapid volume of black smoke, and a damp spray fell around. A column of iron in the centre kept in perpetual and regular motion, rising and sinking successively, as the whole mechanism within seemed alive with noise and action.

"The Syracusan asked an inch of earth, beyond the earth, to move the earth," said Adam; "I stand *in* the world, and lo! with this engine the world shall one day be moved."

"Holy Mother!" faltered Marmaduke; "I pray thee, dread sir, to ponder well ere thou attemptest any such sports with the habitation in which every woman's son is so concerned. Bethink thee, that if in moving the world thou shouldst make any mistake, it would——"

"Now stand there and attend," interrupted Adam, who had not heard one word of this judicious exhortation.

"Pardon me, terrible sir!" exclaimed Marmaduke, in great trepidation, and retreating rapidly to the door; "but I have heard that the fiends are mighty malignant to all lookers-on, not initiated."

While he spoke, fast gushed the smoke, heavily heaved the fairy hammers, up and down, down and up, sank or rose the column, with its sullen sound. The young man's heart sank to the soles of his feet.

"In deed and in truth," he stammered out, "I am but a dolt in these matters; I wish thee all success compatible with the weal of a Christian, and bid thee, in sad humility, good day:" and he added, in a whisper—"the Lord's forgiveness! Amen!"

Marmaduke, then, fairly rushed through the open

door, and hurried out of the chamber as fast as possible.

He breathed more freely as he descended the stairs. "Before I would call that grey carle my father, or his child my wife, may I feel all the hammers of the elves and sprites he keeps tortured within that ugly little prison-house playing a death's march on my body. Holy St. Dunstan, the timbrel-girls came in time! They say these wizards always have fair daughters, and their love can be no blessing!"

As he thus muttered, the door of Sibyll's chamber opened, and she stood before him at the threshold. Her countenance was very pale, and bore evidence of weeping. There was a silence on both sides, which the girl was the first to break.

"So, Madge tells me, thou art about to leave us?"

"Yes, gentle maiden! I—I—that is, my Lord of Warwick has summoned me. I wish and pray for all blessings on thee! and—and—if ever it be mine to serve or aid thee, it will be—that is—verily, my tongue falters, but my heart—that is—fare thee well, maiden! Would thou hadst a less wise father; and so may the saints (St. Anthony especially—whom the Evil One was parlous afraid of) guard and keep thee!"

With this strange and incoherent address, Marmaduke left the maiden standing by the threshold of her miserable chamber. Hurrying into the hall, he summoned Alwyn from his meditations, and, giving the gittern to Madge, with an injunction to render it to her mistress, with his greeting and service, he vaulted lightly on his steed; the steady and more sober Alwyn mounted his palfrey with slow care and due caution. As the air of spring waved the fair locks of the young cavalier, as the good horse caracolled under his lithe-

some weight, his natural temper of mind, hardy, healthful, joyous, and world-awake, returned to him. The image of Sibyll and her strange father fled from his thoughts like sickly dreams.

BOOK II

THE KING'S COURT

CHAPTER I

EARL WARWICK THE KING-MAKER

The young men entered the Strand, which, thanks to the profits of a toll-bar, was a passable road for equestrians, studded towards the river, as we have before observed, with stately and half-fortified mansions; while on the opposite side, here and there, were straggling houses of a humbler kind—the mediæval villas of merchant and trader—(for, from the earliest period since the Conquest, the Londoners had delight in such retreats), surrounded with blossoming orchards,* and adorned in front with the fleur-de-lis, emblem of the vain victories of renowned Agincourt. But by far the greater portion of the road northward, stretched, unbuilt upon, towards a fair chain of fields and meadows, refreshed by many brooks, "turning water-mills with a pleasant noise." High rose, on the thoroughfare, the famous Cross, at which "the Judges Itinerant whilome sate, without London." † There, hallowed and solitary, stood the inn for the penitent pilgrims, who sought "the murmuring runnels" of St. Clement's healing well; for in this neighbourhood,

* Fitzstephen.—"On all sides, without the suburbs, are the citizens' gardens and orchards," &c.

† Stowe.

even from the age of the Roman, springs of crystal wave, and salubrious virtue, received the homage of credulous disease. Through the gloomy arches of the Temple Gate and Lud, our horsemen wound their way, and finally arrived in safety at Marmaduke's hostelrie in the East Chepe. Here Marmaduke found the decorators of his comely person already assembled. The simpler yet more manly fashions he had taken from the provinces were now exchanged for an attire worthy the kinsman of the great minister of a court unparalleled, since the reign of William the Red King, for extravagant gorgeousness of dress. His corset was of the finest cloth, sown with seed pearls; above it, the lawn shirt, worn without collar, partially appeared, fringed with gold; over this was loosely hung a super-tunic of crimson sarcenet, slashed and pounced with a profusion of fringes. His velvet cap, turned up at the sides, extended in a point far over the forehead. His hose—under which appellation is to be understood what serves us of the modern day both for stockings and pantaloons—were of white cloth, and his shoes, very narrow, were curiously carved into chequer work at the instep, and tied with bobbins of gold thread, turning up, like skates at the extremity, three inches in length. His dagger was suspended by a slight silver-gilt chain, and his girdle contained a large gipsire, or pouch, of embossed leather, richly gilt.

And this dress, marvellous as it seemed to the Nevile, the tailor gravely assured him was far under the mark of the highest fashion, and that an' the noble youth had been a knight, the shoes would have stretched at least three inches farther over the natural length of the feet, the placard have shone with jewels,

and the tunic luxuriated in flowers of damacene. Even as it was, however, Marmaduke felt a natural diffidence of his habiliments, which cost him a round third of his whole capital. And no bride ever unveiled herself with more shamefaced bashfulness than did Marmaduke Nevile experience when he remounted his horse, and, taking leave of his foster-brother, bent his way to Warwick Lane, where the earl lodged.

The narrow streets were, however, crowded with equestrians, whose dress eclipsed his own, some bending their way to the tower, some to the palaces of the Flete. Carriages there were none, and only twice he encountered the huge litters, in which some aged prelate or some high-born dame veiled greatness from the day. But the frequent vistas to the river gave glimpses of the gay boats and barges that crowded the Thames, which was then the principal thoroughfare for every class, but more especially the noble. The ways were fortunately dry and clean for London; though occasionally deep holes and furrows in the road menaced perils to the unwary horseman. The streets themselves might well disappoint in splendour the stranger's eye; for although, viewed at a distance, ancient London was incalculably more picturesque and stately than the modern; yet when fairly in its tortuous labyrinths, it seemed to those who had improved the taste by travel, the meanest and the mirkiest capital of Christendom. The streets were marvellously narrow, the upper stories, chiefly of wood, projecting far over the lower, which were formed of mud and plaster. The shops were pitiful booths, and the 'prentices standing at the entrance bare-headed and cap in hand, and lining the passages, as the old French

writer avers *comme idoles*,* kept up an eternal din with their clamorous invitations, often varied by pert witticisms on some churlish passenger, or loud vituperations of each other. The whole ancient family of the London criers were in full bay. Scarcely had Marmaduke's ears recovered the shock of "Hot peascods—all hot," than they were saluted with "mackerel," "sheep's feet—hot sheep's feet." At the smaller taverns stood the inviting vociferators of "cock-pie," "ribs of beef—hot beef," while, blended with these multitoned discords, whined the vielle or primitive hurdy-gurdy, screamed the pipe, twanged the harp, from every quarter where the thirsty paused to drink, or the idler stood to gape.†

Through this Babel, Marmaduke at last slowly wound his way, and arrived before the mighty mansion in which the chief baron of England held his state.

As he dismounted and resigned his steed to the servitor hired for him by Alwyn, Marmaduke paused a moment, struck by the disparity, common as it was to eyes more accustomed to the metropolis, between the stately edifice and the sordid neighbourhood. He had not noticed this so much, when he had repaired to the earl's house on his first arrival in London—for his thoughts then had been too much bewildered by the general bustle and novelty of the scene,—but now it seemed to him, that he better comprehended the homage accorded to a great noble in surveying, at a glance, the immeasurable eminence to which he was elevated above his fellow-men by wealth and rank.

Far on either side of the wings of the earl's abode stretched, in numerous deformity, sheds rather than

* Perim. † See Lydgate's "London Lyckpenny."

houses, of broken plaster and crazy timbers. But, here and there, were open places of public reception, crowded with the lower followers of the puissant chief; and the eye rested on many idle groups of sturdy swash-bucklers, some half-clad in armour, some in rude jerkins of leather, before the doors of these resorts,—as others, like bees about a hive, swarmed in and out with a perpetual hum.

The exterior of Warwick House was of a grey, but dingy stone, and presented a half-fortified and formidable appearance. The windows, or rather loop-holes towards the street, were few, and strongly barred. The black and massive arch of the gateway yawned between two huge square towers; and from a yet higher, but slender tower on the inner side, the flag gave the "White Bear and Ragged Staff" to the smoky air. Still, under the portal as he entered, hung the grate of the portcullis, and the square court which he saw before him swarmed with the more immediate retainers of the earl, in scarlet jackets, wrought with their chieftain's cognisance. A man of gigantic girth and stature, who officiated as porter, leaning against the wall under the arch, now emerged from the shadow, and with sufficient civility demanded the young visitor's name and business. On hearing the former, he bowed low as he doffed his cap, and conducted Marmaduke through the first quadrangle. The two sides to the right and left were devoted to the offices and rooms of retainers, of whom no less than six hundred, not to speak of the domestic and more orderly retinue, attested the state of the Last of the English Barons on his visits to the capital. Far from being then, as now, the object of the great to thrust all that belongs to the service of the house

out of sight, it was their pride to strike awe into the visitor by the extent of accommodation afforded to their followers: some seated on benches of stone ranged along the walls—some grouped in the centre of the court—some lying at length upon the two oblong patches of what had been turf, till worn away by frequent feet—this domestic army filled the young Nevile with an admiration far greater than the gay satins of the knights and nobles who had gathered round the lord of Montagu and Northumberland at the pastime-ground.

This assemblage, however, were evidently under a rude discipline of their own. They were neither noisy nor drunk. They made way with surly obeisance as the cavalier passed, and closing on his track like some horde of wild cattle, gazed after him with earnest silence, and then turned once more to their indolent whispers with each other.

And now, Nevile entering the last side of the quadrangle, the huge hall, divided from the passage by a screen of stone fretwork, so fine as to attest the hand of some architect in the reign of Henry III., stretched to his right; and so vast, in truth, it was, that though more than fifty persons were variously engaged therein, their number was lost in the immense space; of these, at one end of the longer and lower table beneath the dais, some squires of good dress and mien were engaged at chess or dice; others were conferring in the gloomy embrasures of the casements; some walking to and fro; others gathered round the shovel-board. At the entrance of this hall, the porter left Marmaduke, after exchanging a whisper with a gentleman whose dress eclipsed the Nevile's in splendour; and this latter personage, who, though of high

birth, did not disdain to perform the office of chamberlain, or usher, to the king-like earl, advanced to Marmaduke with a smile, and said—

"My lord expects you, sir, and has appointed this time to receive you, that you may not be held back from his presence by the crowds that crave audience in the forenoon. Please to follow me!" This said, the gentleman slowly preceded the visitor, now and then stopping to exchange a friendly word with the various parties he passed in his progress; for the urbanity which Warwick possessed himself, his policy inculcated as a duty on all who served him. A small door at the other extremity of the hall admitted into an ante-room, in which some half-score pages, the sons of knights and barons, were gathered round an old warrior, placed at their head as a sort of tutor, to instruct them in all knightly accomplishments; and beckoning forth one of these youths from the ring, the earl's chamberlain said, with a profound reverence—"Will you be pleased, my young lord, to conduct your cousin, Master Marmaduke Nevile, to the earl's presence." The young gentleman eyed Marmaduke with a supercilious glance.

"Marry!" said he, pertly, "if a man born in the north were to feed all his cousins, he would soon have a tail as long as my uncle, the stout earl's. Come, sir cousin, this way."

And without tarrying even to give Nevile information of the name and quality of his new-found relation—who was no less than Lord Montagu's son, the sole male heir to the honours of that mighty family, though now learning the apprenticeship of chivalry amongst his uncle's pages—the boy passed before Marmaduke with a saunter, that, had they been in

plain Westmoreland, might have cost him a cuff from the stout hand of the indignant elder cousin. He raised the tapestry at one end of the room, and ascending a short flight of broad stairs, knocked gently on the panels of an arched door sunk deep in the walls.

"Enter!" said a clear, loud voice, and the next moment Marmaduke was in the presence of the King-maker.

He heard his guide pronounce his name, and saw him smile maliciously at the momentary embarrassment the young man displayed, as the boy passed by Marmaduke, and vanished. The Earl of Warwick was seated near a door that opened upon an inner court, or rather garden, which gave communication to the river. The chamber was painted in the style of Henry III., with huge figures representing the battle of Hastings, or rather, for there were many separate pieces, the conquest of Saxon England. Over each head, to enlighten the ignorant, the artist had taken the precaution to insert a label, which told the name and the subject. The ceiling was groined, vaulted, and emblazoned with the richest gilding and colours. The chimney-piece (a modern ornament) rose to the roof, and represented in bold reliefs, gilt and decorated, the signing of Magna Charta. The floor was strewed thick with dried rushes, and odorous herbs; the furniture was scanty, but rich. The low-backed chairs, of which there were but four, carved in ebony, had cushions of velvet with fringes of massive gold. A small cupboard, or beaufet, covered with *carpetz de cuir* (carpets of gilt and painted leather), of great price, held various quaint and curious ornaments of plate inwrought with precious stones; and beside

this—a singular contrast—on a plain Gothic table lay the helmet, the gauntlets, and the battle-axe of the master, Warwick himself, seated before a large cumbrous desk, was writing—but slowly and with pain—and he lifted his finger as the Nevile approached, in token of his wish to conclude a task probably little congenial to his tastes. But Marmaduke was grateful for the moments afforded him to recover his self-possession, and to examine his kinsman.

The earl was in the lusty vigour of his age. His hair, of the deepest black, was worn short, as if in disdain of the effeminate fashions of the day, and fretted bare from the temples, by the constant and early friction of his helmet, gave to a forehead naturally lofty yet more majestic appearance of expanse and height. His complexion, though dark and sunburnt, glowed with rich health. The beard was closely shaven, and left in all its remarkable beauty the contour of the oval face and strong jaw—strong as if clasped in iron. The features were marked and aquiline, as was common to those of Norman blood. The form spare, but of prodigious width and depth of chest, the more apparent from the fashion of the short surcoat, which was thrown back, and left in broad expanse a placard, not of holiday velvet and satins, but of steel polished as a mirror, and inlaid with gold. And now, as concluding his task, the earl rose and motioned Marmaduke to a stool by his side, his great stature, which, from the length of his limbs, was not so observable when he sat, actually startled his guest. Tall as Marmaduke was himself, the earl towered* above him,

* The faded portrait of Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick, in the Rous Roll, preserved at the Herald's College, does justice, at least, to the height and majesty of his stature. The portrait of Edward IV. is the only one in that long series which at all rivals the stately proportions of the King-maker.

—with his high, majestic, smooth, unwrinkled forehead,—like some Paladin of the rhyme of poet or romancer; and, perhaps, not only in this masculine advantage, but in the rare and harmonious combination of colossal strength with graceful lightness, a more splendid union of all the outward qualities we are inclined to give to the heroes of old, never dazzled the eye, or impressed the fancy. But even this effect of mere person was subordinate to that which this eminent nobleman created—upon his *inferiors*, at least,—by a manner so void of all arrogance, yet of all condescension, so simple, open, cordial, and herolike, that Marmaduke Nevile, peculiarly alive to external impressions, and subdued and fascinated by the earl's first word, and that word was "Welcome!" dropped on his knee, and kissing the hand extended to him, said—"Noble kinsman, in thy service, and for thy sake, let me live and die!" Had the young man been prepared by the subtlest master of court-craft for this interview, so important to his fortunes, he could not have advanced a hundredth part so far with the great earl, as he did by that sudden, frank burst of genuine emotion; for Warwick was extremely sensitive to the admiration he excited—vain or proud of it, it matters not which—grateful as a child for love, and inexorable as a woman for slight or insult: in rude ages, one sex has often the qualities of the other.

"Thou hast thy father's warm heart and hasty thought, Marmaduke," said Warwick, raising him; "and now he is gone where, we trust, brave men, shrived of their sins, look down upon us, who should be thy friend but Richard Nevile? So—so—yes—let me look at thee. Ha! stout Guy's honest face, every line of it; but to the girls, perhaps, comelier, for

wanting a scar or two. Never blush—thou shalt win the scars yet. So thou hast a letter from thy father?"

"It is here, noble lord."

"And why," said the earl, cutting the silk with his dagger—"why hast thou so long hung back from presenting it? But I need not ask thee. These uncivil times have made kith and kin doubt worse of each other than thy delay did of me. Sir Guy's mark, sure eno'! Brave old man! I loved him the better, for that, like me, the sword was more meet than the pen for his bold hand." Here Warwick scanned, with some slowness, the lines dictated by the dead to the priest; and when he had done, he laid the letter respectfully on his desk, and bowing his head over it, muttered to himself—it might be an Ave for the deceased. "Well," he said, reseating himself, and again motioning Marmaduke to follow his example—"thy father was, in sooth, to blame for the side he took in the Wars. What son of the Norman could bow knee or vale plume to that shadow of a king—Henry of Windsor?—and, for his bloody wife, she knew no more of an Englishman's pith and pride than I know of the rhymes and roundels of old René, her father. Guy Nevile—good Guy—many a day in my boyhood did he teach me how to bear my lance at the crest, and direct my sword at the mail-joints. He was cunning at fence—thy worshipful father—but I was ever a bad scholar; and my dull arm, to this day, hopes more from its strength than its craft."

"I have heard it said, noble earl, that the stoutest hand can scarcely lift your battle-axe."

"Fables! romaunt!" answered the earl, smiling; "there it lies—go and lift it."

Marmaduke went to the table, and, though with

some difficulty, raised and swung this formidable weapon.

"By my halidame, well swung, cousin mine! Its use depends not on the strength, but the practice. Why look you now,—there is the boy Richard of Gloucester, who comes not up to thy shoulder, and by dint of custom each day can wield mace or axe with as much ease as a jester doth his lathe-sword. Ah! trust me, Marmaduke—the York House is a princely one; and if we must have a king, we barons, by stout St. George, let no meaner race ever furnish our lieges. But to thyself, Marmaduke—what are thy views and thy wishes?"

"To be one of thy following, noble Warwick."

"I thank and accept thee, young Nevile; but thou hast heard that I am about to leave England, and in the meantime thy youth would run danger without a guide." The earl paused a moment, and resumed. "My brother of Montagu showed thee cold countenance; but a word from me will win thee his grace and favour. What sayest thou—wilt thou be one of his gentlemen? If so, I will tell thee the qualities a man must have:—a discreet tongue, a quick eye, the last fashion in hood and shoe-bobbins, a perfect seat on thy horse, a light touch for the gittern, a voice for a love-song, and——"

"I have none of these, save the horsemanship, gracious my lord; and if thou wilt not receive me thyself, I will not burden my Lord of Montagu and Northumberland."

"Hot and quick! No! John of Montagu would not suit thee, nor thou him. But how to provide for thee till my return, I know not."

"Dare I not hope, then, to make one of your embassage, noble earl?"

Warwick bent his brows, and looked at him in surprise.

"Of our embassage! Why, thou art haughty, indeed! Nay, and so a soldier's son and a Nevile should be! I blame thee not; but I could not make thee one of my train, without creating a hundred enemies—to me (but that's nothing)—and to thee, which were much. Knowest thou not that there is scarce a gentleman of my train below the state of a peer's son, and that I have made, by refusals, malcontents eno', as it is—yet, hold! there is my learned brother, the Archbishop of York. Knowest thou Latin and the schools?"

"'Fore Heaven, my lord," said the Nevile, bluntly, "I see already I had best go back to green Westmoreland, for I am as unfit for his grace the archbishop, as I am for my Lord Montagu."

"Well, then," said the earl, drily, "since thou hast not yet station enough for my train, nor glosing for Northumberland, nor wit and lere for the archbishop, I suppose, my poor youth, I must e'en make you only a gentleman about the king! It is not a post so sure of quick rising and full gipsires as one about myself, or my brethren, but it will be less envied, and is good for thy first essay. How goes the clock? Oh! here is Nick Alwyn's new horologe. He tells me that the English will soon rival the Dutch* in these baubles. The more the pity!—our red-faced yeomen, alas, are fast sinking into lank-jawed mechanics! We shall

* Clockwork appears to have been introduced into England in the reign of Edward III., when three Dutch horologers were invited over from Delft. They must soon have passed into common use, for Chaucer thus familiarly speaks of them:—

"Full sickerer was his crowing in his loge,
Than is a clock or any abbey orloge."

find the king in his garden within the next half-hour. Thou shalt attend me."

Marmaduke expressed, with more feeling than eloquence, the thanks he owed for an offer that, he was about to say, exceeded his hopes, but he had already, since his departure from Westmoreland, acquired sufficient wit to think twice of his words. And so eagerly, at that time, did the youth of the nobility contend for the honour of posts about the person of Warwick, and even of his brothers, and so strong was the belief that the earl's power to make or to mar fortune was all-paramount in England, that even a place in the king's household was considered an inferior appointment to that which made Warwick the immediate patron and protector. This was more especially the case amongst the more haughty and ancient gentry, since the favour shown by Edward to the relations of his wife, and his own indifference to the rank and birth of his associates. Warwick had therefore spoken with truth when he expressed a comparative pity for the youth, whom he could not better provide for than by a place about the court of his sovereign!

The earl then drew from Marmaduke some account of his early training, his dependence on his brother, his adventures at the archery-ground, his misadventure with the robbers, and even his sojourn with Warner—though Marmaduke was discreetly silent as to the very existence of Sibyll. The earl, in the mean while, walked to and fro the chamber with a light, careless stride, every moment pausing to laugh at the frank simplicity of his kinsman, or to throw in some shrewd remark, which he cast purposely in the rough Westmoreland dialect; for no man ever attains to

the popularity that rejoiced or accursed the Earl of Warwick, without a tendency to broad and familiar humour, without a certain commonplace of character in its shallower and more every-day properties. This charm—always great *in* the great—Warwick possessed to perfection; and in him—such was his native and unaffected majesty of bearing, and such the splendour that surrounded his name—it never seemed coarse or unfamiliar, but "everything he did became him best." Marmaduke had just brought his narrative to a conclusion, when, after a slight tap at the door, which Warwick did not hear, two fair young forms bounded joyously in, and, not seeing the stranger, threw themselves upon Warwick's breast with the caressing familiarity of infancy.

"Ah, father," said the elder of these two girls, as Warwick's hand smoothed her hair fondly, "you promised you would take us in your barge to see the sports on the river, and now it will be too late."

"Make your peace with your young cousins here," said the earl, turning to Marmaduke; "you will cost them an hour's joyaunce. This is my eldest daughter, Isabel; and this soft-eyed, pale-cheeked damozel—too loyal for a leaf of the red rose—is the Lady Anne."

The two girls had started from their father's arms at the first address to Marmaduke, and their countenances had relapsed from their caressing and childlike expression, into all the stately demureness with which they had been brought up to regard a stranger. Howbeit, this reserve, to which he was accustomed, awed Marmaduke less than the alternate gaiety and sadness of the wilder Sibyll, and he addressed them with all the gallantry to the exercise of which he had been reared; concluding his compliments with a dec-

laration that he would rather forego the advantage proffered him by the earl's favour with the king, than foster one obnoxious and ungracious memory in damozels so fair and honoured.

A haughty smile flitted for a moment over the proud young face of Isabel Nevile; but the softer Anne blushed, and drew bashfully behind her sister.

As yet these girls, born for the highest and fated to the most wretched fortunes, were in all the bloom of earliest youth; but the difference between their characters might be already observable in their mien and countenance. Isabel, of tall and commanding stature, had some resemblance to her father, in her aquiline features, rich, dark hair, and the lustrous brilliancy of her eyes; while Anne, less striking, yet not less lovely, of smaller size and slighter proportions, bore in her pale, clear face, her dove-like eyes, and her gentle brow, an expression of yielding meekness not unmixed with melancholy, which, conjoined with an exquisite symmetry of features, could not fail of exciting interest where her sister commanded admiration. Not a word, however, from either did Marmaduke abstract in return for his courtesies, nor did either he or the earl seem to expect it; for the latter, seating himself and drawing Anne on his knee, while Isabella walked with stately grace towards the table that bore her father's warlike accoutrements, and played, as it were, unconsciously with the black plume on his black burgonot, said to Nevile—

"Well, thou hast seen enough of the Lancastrian raptrils to make thee true to the Yorkists. I would I could say as much for the king himself, who is already crowding the court with that venomous faction, in honour of Dame Elizabeth Grey—born Mistress

Woodville, and now Queen of England. Ha! my proud Isabel, thou wouldst have better filled the throne that thy father built!"

And at these words a proud flash broke from the earl's dark eyes, betraying even to Marmaduke the secret of perhaps his earliest alienation from Edward IV.

Isabella pouted her rich lip, but said nothing. "As for thee, Anne," continued the earl, "it is a pity that monks cannot marry—thou wouldst have suited some sober priest better than a mailed knight. 'Fore George, I would not ask thee to buckle my baldrick when the war-steeds were snorting, but I would trust Isabel with the links of my hauberk."

"Nay, father," said the low timid voice of Anne, "if thou wert going to danger, I could be brave in all that could guard thee!"

"Why, that's my girl—kiss me! Thou hast a look of thy mother now—so thou hast! and I will not chide thee the next time I hear thee muttering soft treason, in pity of Henry of Windsor."

"Is he not to be pitied?—Crown, wife, son, and Earl Warwick's stout arm—lost—lost!"

"No!" said Isabel, suddenly; "no, sweet sister Anne, and fie on thee for the words! He lost all, because he had neither the hand of a knight nor the heart of a man! For the rest—Margaret of Anjou, or her butchers, beheaded our father's father!"

"And may God and St. George forget me, when I forget those grey and gory hairs!" exclaimed the earl; and, putting away the Lady Anne somewhat roughly, he made a stride across the room, and stood by his hearth. "And yet Edward, the son of Richard of York, who fell by my father's side—he forgets—

he forgives! And the minions of Rivers the Lancastrian tread the heels of Richard of Warwick!"

At this unexpected turn in the conversation, peculiarly unwelcome, as it may be supposed, to the son of one who had fought on the Lancastrian side, in the very battle referred to, Marmaduke felt somewhat uneasy, and, turning to the Lady Anne, he said, with the gravity of wounded pride, "I owe more to my lord, your father, than I even wist of—how much he must have overlooked to——"

"Not so!" interrupted Warwick, who overheard him—"not so; thou wrongest me! Thy father was shocked at those butcheries—thy father recoiled from that accursed standard—thy father was of a stock ancient and noble as my own! But, these Woodvilles! —tush!—my passion overmasters me. We will go to the king—it is time."

Warwick here rung the hand-bell on his table, and on the entrance of his attendant gentleman, bade him see that the barge was in readiness; then, beckoning to his kinsman, and with a nod to his daughters, he caught up his plumed cap, and passed at once into the garden.

"Anne," said Isabel, when the two girls were alone, "thou hast vexed my father, and what marvel? If the Lancastrians can be pitied, the Earl of Warwick must be condemned!"

"Unkind!" said Anne, shedding tears; "I can pity woe and mischance, without blaming those whose hard duty it might be to achieve them."

"In good sooth, cannot I! Thou wouldst pity and pardon till thou leftst no distinction between foeman and friend—liefe and loathing. Be it mine, like my great father, to love and to hate!"

"Yet why art thou so attached to the White Rose?" said Anne, stung, if not to malice, at least to archness. "Thou knowest my father's nearest wish was that his eldest daughter might be betrothed to King Edward. Dost thou not pay good for evil when thou seest no excellence out of the House of York?"

"Saucy Anne," answered Isabel, with a half smile, "I am not raught by thy shafts, for I was a child for the nurses, when King Edward sought a wife for his love. But were I chafed—as I may be vain enough to know myself—whom should I blame?—Not the king, but the Lancastrian who witched him!"

She paused a moment, and, looking away, added in a low tone—"Didst thou hear, sister Anne, if the Duke of Clarence visited my father the forenoon?"

"Ah! Isabel—Isabel!"

"Ah! sister Anne—sister Anne! Wilt thou know all my secrets ere I know them myself?"—and Isabel, with something of her father's playfulness, put her hand to Anne's laughing lips.

Meanwhile Warwick, after walking musingly a few moments along the garden, which was formed by plots of sward, bordered with fruit-trees, and white rose trees not yet in blossom, turned to his silent kinsman, and said—"Forgive me, cousin mine, for this outburst against thy brave father's faction; but when thou hast been a short while at court, thou wilt see where the sore is. Certes, I love this king!" Here his dark face lighted up. "Love him as a king,—ay, and as a son! And who would not love him; brave as his sword, gallant, and winning, and gracious as the noonday in summer? Besides, I placed him on his throne—I honour myself in him!"

The earl's stature dilated as he spoke the last sen-

tence, and his hand rested on his dagger hilt. He resumed, with the same daring and incautious candour that stamped his dauntless soldier-like nature, "God hath given me no son. Isabel of Warwick had been a mate for William the Norman; and my grandson, if heir to his grandsire's soul, should have ruled from the throne of England over the realms of Charlemagne! But it hath pleased Him, whom the Christian knight alone bows to without shame, to order otherwise. So be it. I forgot my just pretensions—forgot my blood, and counselled the king to strengthen his throne with the alliance of Louis XI. He rejected the Princess Bona of Savoy, to marry widow Elizabeth Grey—I sorrowed for his sake, and forgave the slight to my counsels. At his prayer I followed the train of his queen, and hushed the proud hearts of our barons to obeisance. But since then, this Dame Woodville, whom I queened, if her husband mated, must dispute this roiaulmo with mine and me—a Nevile, now-a-days, must vail his plume to a Woodville! And not the great barons whom it will suit Edward's policy to win from the Lancastrians—not the Exeters and the Somersets—but the craven varlets, and lackeys, and dross of the camp—false alike to Henry and to Edward—are to be fondled into lordships and dandled into power. Young man, I am speaking hotly—Richard Nevile never lies nor conceals. But I am speaking to a kinsman, am I not? Thou hearest—thou wilt not repeat?"

"Sooner would I pluck forth my tongue by the roots."

"Enough!" returned the earl, with a pleased smile. "When I come from France, I will speak more to thee. Meanwhile be courteous to all men—servile to none. Now to the king."

So speaking, he shook back his surcoat, drew his cap over his brow, and passed to the broad stairs, at the foot of which fifty rowers, with their badges on their shoulders, waited in the huge barge, gilt richly at prow and stern, and with an awning of silk, wrought with the earl's arms and cognisance. As they pushed off, six musicians, placed towards the helm, began a slow and half Eastern march, which, doubtless, some crusader of the Temple had brought from the cymbals and trumps of Palestine.

CHAPTER II

KING EDWARD THE FOURTH

The Tower of London, more consecrated to associations of gloom and blood than those of gaiety and splendour, was, nevertheless, during the reign of Edward IV., the seat of a gallant and gorgeous court. That king, from the first to the last so dear to the people of London, made it his principal residence when in his metropolis; and its ancient halls and towers were then the scene of many a brawl and galliard. As Warwick's barge now approached its huge walls, rising from the river, there was much that might either animate or awe, according to the mood of the spectator. The king's barge, with many lesser craft, reserved for the use of the courtiers, gay with awnings and streamers, and painting and gilding, lay below the wharfs, not far from the gate of St. Thomas, now called the Traitor's Gate. On the walk raised above the battlemented wall of the inner ward, not only paced the sentries, but there dames and knights were inhaling the noonday breezes, and the gleam of

their rich dresses of cloth of gold glanced upon the eye at frequent intervals from tower to tower. Over the vast round turret, behind the Traitor's Gate, now called "The Bloody Tower," floated cheerily in the light wind, the royal banner. Near the Lion's Tower, two or three of the keepers of the menagerie, in the king's livery, were leading forth, by a strong chain, the huge white bear that made one of the boasts of the collection, and was an especial favourite with the king and his brother Richard. The sheriffs of London were bound to find this grisly minion his chain and his cord, when he deigned to amuse himself with bathing or "fishing" in the river; and several boats, filled with gape-mouthed passengers, lay near the wharf, to witness the diversions of Bruin. These folk set up a loud shout of—"A Warwick!—a Warwick!" "The stout earl, and God bless him!" as the gorgeous barge shot towards the fortress. The earl acknowledged their greeting by vailing his plumed cap, and passing the keepers with a merry allusion to their care of his own badge, and a friendly compliment to the grunting bear, he stepped ashore, followed by his kinsman. Now, however, he paused a moment, and a more thoughtful shade passed over his countenance, as, glancing his eye carelessly aloft towards the standard of King Edward, he caught sight of the casement in the neighbouring tower, of the very room in which the sovereign of his youth, Henry the Sixth, was a prisoner, almost within hearing of the revels of his successor; then, with a quick stride, he hurried on through the vast court, and, passing the White Tower, gained the royal lodge. Here, in the great hall, he left his companion, amidst a group of squires and gentlemen, to whom he for-

mally presented the Nevile as his friend and kinsman, and was ushered by the deputy-chamberlain (with an apology for the absence of his chief, the Lord Hastings, who had gone abroad to fly his falcon) into the small garden, where Edward was idling away the interval between the noon and evening meals—repasts to which already the young king inclined with that intemperate zest and ardour which he carried into all his pleasures, and which finally destroyed the handsomest person, and embruted one of the most vigorous intellects of the age.

The garden, if bare of flowers, supplied their place by the various and brilliant-coloured garbs of the living beauties assembled on its straight walks and smooth sward. Under one of those graceful cloisters, which were the taste of the day, and had been recently built and gaily decorated, the earl was stopped in his path by a group of ladies playing at closheys (ninepins) of ivory;* and one of these fair dames, who excelled the rest in her skill, had just bowled down the central or crowned pin—the king of the closheys. This lady, no less a person than Elizabeth, the Queen of England, was then in her thirty-sixth year—ten years older than her lord—but the peculiar fairness and delicacy of her complexion, still preserved to her beauty the aspect and bloom of youth. From a lofty head-gear, embroidered with fleur-de-lis, round which wreathed a light diadem of pearls, her hair of the pale yellow, considered then the perfection of beauty, flowed so straight and so shining down her shoulders, almost to the knees, that it seemed like a mantle of gold. The baudekin stripes

* Narrative of Louis of Bruges, Lord Grauthuse. Edited by Sir F. Madden. Archæologia, 1836.

(blue and gold) of her tunic attested her royalty. The blue court-pie of satin was bordered with ermine, and the sleeves, fitting close to an arm of exquisite contour, shone with seed-pearls. Her features were straight and regular, yet would have been insipid, but for an expression rather of cunning than intellect;—and the high arch of her eyebrows, with a slight curve downward of a mouth otherwise beautiful, did not improve the expression, by an addition of something supercilious and contemptuous, rather than haughty or majestic.

"My lord of Warwick," said Elizabeth, pointing to the fallen closhey, "what would my enemies say if they heard I had toppled down the king?"

"They would content themselves with asking which of your grace's brothers you would place in his stead," answered the hardy earl, unable to restrain the sarcasm.

The queen blushed, and glanced round her ladies with an eye which never looked direct or straight upon its object, but wandered sidelong with a furtive and stealthy expression, that did much to obtain for her the popular character of falseness and self-seeking. Her displeasure was yet more increased by observing the ill-concealed smile which the taunt had called forth.

"Nay, my lord," she said, after a short pause, "we value the peace of our roiaulme too much for so high an ambition. Were we to make a brother even the prince of the closheys, we should disappoint the hopes of a Nevile."

The earl disdained pursuing the war of words, and answering, coldly—"The Neviles are more famous for making ingrates than asking favours. I leave

your highness to the closheys"—turned away, and strode towards the king, who, at the opposite end of the garden, was reclining on a bench beside a lady, in whose ear, to judge by her downcast and blushing cheek, he was breathing no unwelcome whispers.

"Mort-Dieu!" muttered the earl, who was singularly exempt, himself, from the amorous follies of the day, and eyed them with so much contempt that it often obscured his natural downright penetration into character, and never more than when it led him afterwards to underrate the talents of Edward IV.—"Mort-Dieu! if, an hour before the battle of Touton, some wizard had shown me in his glass this glimpse of the gardens of the Tower, that giglet for a queen, and that squire of dames for a king, I had not slain my black destrier (poor Malech!), that I might conquer or die for Edward Earl of March!"

"But see!" said the lady, looking up from the enamoured and conquering eyes of the king; "art thou not ashamed, my lord?—the grim earl comes to chide thee for thy faithlessness to thy queen, whom he loves so well."

"Pasque-Dieu! as my cousin Louis of France says or swears," answered the king, with an evident petulance in his altered voice—"I would that Warwick could be only worn with one's armour! I would as lief try to kiss through my vizor as hear him talk of glory and Touton, and King John and poor Edward II., because I am not always in mail. Go! leave us, sweet bonnibel!—we must brave the bear alone!"

The lady inclined her head, drew her hood round her face, and striking into the contrary path from that in which Warwick was slowly striding, gained the group round the queen, whose apparent freedom from

jealousy, the consequence of cold affections and prudent calculation, made one principal cause of the empire she held over the powerful mind, but the indolent temper, of the gay and facile Edward.

The king rose as Warwick now approached him; and the appearance of these two eminent persons was in singular contrast. Warwick, though richly and even gorgeously attired—nay, with all the care which in that age was considered the imperative duty a man of station and birth owed to himself, held in lofty disdain whatever vagary of custom tended to cripple the movements or womanise the man. No loose flowing robes—no shoon half a yard long—no flaunting tawdriness of fringe and aiglet, characterised the appearance of the baron, who, even in peace, gave his dress a half-martial fashion.

But Edward, who, in common with all the princes of the House of York, carried dress to a passion, had not only re-introduced many of the most effeminate modes in vogue under William the Red King, but added to them whatever could tend to impart an almost oriental character to the old Norman garb. His gown (a womanly garment which had greatly superseded, with men of the highest rank, not only the mantle but the surcoat) flowed to his heels, trimmed with ermine, and broidered with large flowers of crimson wrought upon cloth of gold. Over this he wore a tippet of ermine, and a collar or necklace of uncut jewels set in filagree gold; the nether limbs were, it is true, clad in the more manly fashion of tight-fitting hosen, but the folds of the gown, as the day was somewhat fresh, were drawn around so as to conceal the only part of the dress which really betokened the male sex. To add to this unwarlike

attire, Edward's locks, of a rich golden colour, and perfuming the whole air with odours, flowed not in curls, but straight to his shoulders, and the cheek of the fairest lady in his court might have seemed less fair beside the dazzling clearness of a complexion, at once radiant with health and delicate with youth. Yet, in spite of all this effeminacy, the appearance of Edward IV. was *not* effeminate. From this it was preserved, not only by a stature little less commanding than that of Warwick himself, and of great strength and breadth of shoulder, but also by features, beautiful indeed, but pre-eminently masculine —large and bold in their outline, and evincing by their expression all the gallantry and daring characteristic of the hottest soldier, next to Warwick, and, without any exception, the ablest captain, of the age.

"And welcome—a merry welcome, dear Warwick, and cousin mine," said Edward, as Warwick slightly bent his proud knee to his king; "your brother, Lord Montagu, has but left us. Would that our court had the same joyaunce for you as for him."

"Dear and honoured my liege," answered Warwick, his brow smoothing at once—for his affectionate though hasty and irritable nature was rarely proof against the kind voice and winning smile of his young sovereign—"could I ever serve you at the court as I can with the people, you would not complain that John of Montagu was a better courtier than Richard of Warwick. But each to his calling. I depart tomorrow for Calais, and thence to King Louis. And, surely, never envoy or delegate had better chance to be welcome than one empowered to treat of an alliance that will bestow on a prince, deserving, I trust, his fortunes, the sister of the bravest sovereign in Christian Europe."

"Now, out on thy flattery, my cousin; though I must needs own I provoked it by my complaint of thy courtiership. But thou hast learned only half thy business, good Warwick; and it is well Margaret did not hear thee. Is not the prince of France more to be envied for winning a fair lady than having a fortunate soldier for his brother-in-law?"

"My liege," replied Warwick, smiling, "thou knowest I am a poor judge of a lady's fair cheek, though indifferently well skilled as to the valour of a warrior's stout arm. Algates, the Lady Margaret is indeed worthy in her excellent beauties to become the mother of brave men?"

"And that is all we can wring from thy stern lip, man of iron. Well, that must content us. But to more serious matters." And the king, leaning his hand on the earl's arm, and walking with him slowly to and fro the terrace, continued—"Knowest thou not, Warwick, that this French alliance, to which thou hast induced us, displeases sorely our good traders of London?"

"Mort-Dieu!" returned Warwick, bluntly; "and what business have the flat-caps with the marriage of a king's sister? Is it for them to breathe garlick on the alliances of Bourbons and Plantagenets? Faugh! You have spoiled them, good my lord king—you have spoiled them by your condescensions. Henry IV. staled not his majesty to consultations with the mayor of his city. Henry V. gave the knighthood of the Bath to the heroes of Agincourt, not to the vendors of cloth and spices."

"Ah, my poor knights of the Bath!" said Edward, good-humouredly, "wilt thou never let that sore scar quietly over? Ownest thou not that the men had their merits?"

"What the merits were, I weet not," answered the earl;—"unless, peradventure, their wives were comely and young."

"Thou wrongest me, Warwick," said the king, carelessly; "Dame Cook was awry, Dame Philips a grandmother, Dame Jocelyn had lost her front teeth, and Dame Waer saw seven ways at once! But thou forgettest, man, the occasion of those honours—the eve before Elizabeth was crowned—and it was policy to make the city of London have a share in her honours. As to the rest," pursued the king, earnestly and with dignity, "I and my house have owed much to London. When the peers of England, save thee and thy friends, stood aloof from my cause, London was ever loyal and true. Thou seest not, my poor Warwick, that these burgesses are growing up into power by the decline of the orders above them. And if the sword is the monarch's appeal for his right, he must look to contented and honoured industry for his buckler in peace. This is policy—policy, Warwick; and Louis XI. will tell thee the same truths, harsh though they grate in a warrior's ear."

The earl bowed his haughty head, and answered shortly, but with a touching grace—"Be it ever thine, noble king, to rule as it likes thee; and mine to defend with my blood even what I approve not with my brain. But if thou doubtest the wisdom of this alliance, it is not too late yet. Let me dismiss my following, and cross not the seas. Unless thy heart is with the marriage, the ties I would form are threads and cobwebs."

"Nay," returned Edward, irresolutely: "in these great state matters, thy wit is elder than mine; but men do say the Count of Charolois is a mighty lord, and the alliance with Burgundy will be more profitable to staple and mart."

"Then, in God's name, so conclude it!" said the earl, hastily, but with so dark a fire in his eyes that Edward, who was observing him, changed countenance;—"only ask me not, my liege, to advance such a marriage. The Count of Charolois knows me as his foe—shame were mine did I shun to say where I love, where I hate. That proud dullard once slighted me when we met at his father's court—and the wish next to my heart, is to pay back my affront with my battle-axe. Give thy sister to the heir of Burgundy, and forgive me if I depart to my castle of Middleham."

Edward, stung by the sharpness of this reply, was about to answer as became his majesty of king, when Warwick, more deliberately resumed—"Yet think well, Henry of Windsor is thy prisoner, but his cause lives in Margaret and his son. There is but one power in Europe that can threaten thee with aid to the Lancastrians, that power is France. Make Louis thy friend and ally, and thou givest peace to thy life and thy lineage—make Louis thy foe, and count on plots and stratagems, and treason—uneasy days and sleepless nights. Already thou hast lost one occasion to secure that wiliest and most restless of princes, in rejecting the hand of the Princess Bona. Happily, this loss can now be retrieved. But alliance with Burgundy is war with France—war more deadly because Louis is a man who declares it not—a war carried on by intrigue and bribe, by spies and minions, till some disaffection ripens the hour when young Edward of Lancaster shall land on thy coasts, with the Oriflamme and the Red Rose,—with French soldiers and English malcontents. Wouldst thou look to Burgundy for help?—Burgundy will have enough to guard its own

frontiers from the gripe of Louis the Sleepless. Edward, my king, my pupil in arms—Edward, my loved, my honoured liege, forgive Richard Nevile his bluntness, and let not his faults stand in bar of his counsels."

"You are right, as you are ever—safeguard of England, and pillar of my state," said the king, frankly, and pressing the arm he still held, "Go to France and settle all as thou wilt."

Warwick bent low and kissed the hand of his sovereign. "And," said he, with a slight, but a sad smile —"when I am gone, my liege will not repent, will not misthink me, will not listen to my foes, nor suffer merchant and mayor to sigh him back to the mechanics of Flanders?"

"Warwick, thou deemest ill of thy king's kingliness."

"Not of thy kingliness, but that same gracious quality of yielding to counsel which bows this proud nature to submission—often makes me fear for thy firmness, when thy will is won through thy heart. And now, good my liege, forgive me one sentence more. Heaven forefend that I should stand in the way of thy princely favours. A king's countenance is a sun that should shine on all. But bethink thee well, the barons of England are a stubborn and haughty race; chafe not thy most puissant peers by too cold a neglect of their past services, and too lavish a largess to new men."

"Thou aimest at Elizabeth's kin," interrupted Edward, withdrawing his hand from his minister's arm —"and I tell once for all times, that I would rather sink to mine earldom of March, with a subject's right to honour where he loves, than wear crown and wield

sceptre without a king's unquestioned prerogative to ennoble the line and blood of one he has deemed worthy of his throne. As for the barons, with whose wrath thou threatenest me, I banish them not.—If they go in gloom from my court—why, let them chafe themselves sleek again!"

"King Edward," said Warwick, moodily,—"tried services merit not this contempt. It is not as the kith of the queen that I regret to see lands and honour lavished upon men, rooted so newly to the soil that the first blast of the war-trump will scatter their greenness to the winds. But what sorrows me is to mark those who have fought against thee, preferred to the stout loyalty that braved block and field for thy cause. Look round thy court; where are the men of bloody York and victorious Touton?—unrequited, sullen in their strongholds—begirt with their yeomen and retainers. Thou standest—thou, the heir of York—almost alone (save where the Neviles—whom one day thy court will seek also to disgrace and discard—vex their old comrades in arms by their defection)—thou standest almost alone among the favourites and minions of Lancaster. Is there no danger in proving to men that to have served thee is discredit—to have warred against thee is guerdon and grace?"

"Enough of this, cousin," replied the king, with an effort which preserved his firmness. "On this head we cannot agree. Take what else thou wilt of royalty—make treaties and contract marriages—establish peace or proclaim war: but trench not on my sweetest prerogative to give and to forgive. And now, wilt thou tarry and sup with us? The ladies grow impatient of a commune that detains from their eyes the stateliest knight since the Round Table was chopped into fire-wood."

"No, my liege," said Warwick, whom flattery of this sort rather angered than soothed—"I have much yet to prepare. I leave your highness to fairer homage and more witching counsels than mine." So saying, he kissed the king's hand, and was retiring, when he remembered his kinsman, whose humble interests, in the midst of more exciting topics, he had hitherto forgotten, and added, "May I crave, since you are so merciful to the Lancastrians, one grace for my namesake—a Nevile, whose father repented the side he espoused—a son of Sir Guy of Arsdale?"

"Ah," said the king, smiling maliciously, "it pleaseth us much to find that it is easier to the warm heart of our cousin Warwick to preach sententiaries of sternness to his king, than to enforce the same by his own practice!"

"You misthink me, sire. I ask not that Marmaduke Nevile should supplant his superiors and elders —I ask not that he should be made baron and peer— I ask only that, as a young gentleman, who hath taken no part himself in the wars, and whose father repented his error, your grace should strengthen your following by an ancient name and a faithful servant. But I should have remembered me that his name of Nevile would have procured him a taunt in the place of advancement."

"Saw man ever so froward a temper?" cried Edward, not without reason. "Why, Warwick, thou art as shrewish to a jest as a woman to advice. Thy kinsman's fortunes shall be my care. Thou sayest thou hast enemies—I weet not who they be. But to show what I think of them, I make thy namesake and client a gentleman of my chamber. When Warwick is false to Edward, let him think that Warwick's kinsman

wears a dagger within reach of the king's heart day and night."

This speech was made with so noble and touching a kindness of voice and manner, that the earl, thoroughly subdued, looked at his sovereign with moistened eyes, and only trusting himself to say—"Edward, thou art king, knight, gentleman, and soldier, and I verily trow that I love thee best when my petulant zeal makes me anger thee most,"—turned away with evident emotion, and passing the queen and her ladies with a lowlier homage than that with which he had before greeted them, left the garden. Edward's eye followed him, musingly. The frank expression of his face vanished, and, with the deep breath of a man who is throwing a weight from his heart, he muttered—

"He loves me—yes,—but will suffer no one else to love me! This must end some day. I am weary of the bondage." And sauntering towards the ladies, he listened in silence, but not apparently in displeasure, to his queen's sharp sayings on the imperious mood and irritable temper of the iron-handed builder of his throne.

CHAPTER III

THE ANTECHAMBER

As Warwick passed the door that led from the garden, he brushed by a young man, the baudekin stripes of whose vest announced his relationship to the king, and who, though far less majestic than Edward, possessed sufficient of family likeness to pass for a very handsome and comely person. But his countenance

wanted the open and fearless expression which gave that of the king so masculine and heroic a character. The features were smaller, and less clearly cut, and to a physiognomical observer there was much that was weak and irresolute in the light blue eyes and the smiling lips, which never closed firmly, over the teeth. He did not wear the long gown then so much in vogue, but his light figure was displayed to advantage by a vest, fitting it exactly, descending half-way down the thigh, and trimmed at the border and the collar with ermine. The sleeves of the doublet were slit, so as to show the white lawn beneath, and adorned with aiglets and knots of gold. Over the left arm hung a rich jacket of furs and velvet, something like that adopted by the modern hussar. His hat or cap was high and tiara-like, with a single white plume, and the ribbon of the garter bound his knee. Though the dress of this personage was thus far less effeminate than Edward's, the effect of his appearance was infinitely more so—partly, perhaps, from a less muscular frame, and partly from his extreme youth. For George Duke of Clarence was then, though initiated not only in the gaieties, but all the intrigues of the court, only in his eighteenth year. Laying his hand, every finger of which sparkled with jewels, on the earl's shoulder—"Hold!" said the young prince in a whisper, "a word in thy ear, noble Warwick."

The earl, who, next to Edward, loved Clarence the most of his princely house, and who always found the latter as docile as the other (when humour or affection seized him) was intractable, relaxed into a familiar smile at the duke's greeting, and suffered the young prince to draw him aside from the groups of courtiers with whom the chamber was filled, to the

leaning-places (as they were called) of a large mullion window. In the mean while, as they thus conferred, the courtiers interchanged looks, and many an eye of fear and hate was directed towards the stately form of the earl. For these courtiers were composed principally of the kindred or friends of the queen, and though they dared not openly evince the malice with which they retorted Warwick's lofty scorn and undisguised resentment at their new fortunes, they ceased not to hope for his speedy humiliation and disgrace, recking little what storm might rend the empire, so that it uprooted the giant oak, which still, in some measure, shaded their sunlight, and checked their growth. True, however, that amongst these were mingled, though rarely, men of a hardier stamp and nobler birth—some few of the veteran friends of the king's great father—and these, keeping sternly and loftily aloof from the herd, regarded Warwick with the same almost reverential and yet affectionate admiration which he inspired amongst the yeomen, peasants, and mechanics; for in that growing but quiet struggle of the burgesses, as it will often happen in more civilised times, the great Aristocracy and the Populace were much united in affection, though with very different objects; and the Middle and Trading Class, with whom the earl's desire for French alliances and disdain of commerce had much weakened his popularity, alone shared not the enthusiasm of their countrymen for the lion-hearted minister.

Nevertheless, it must here be owned, that the rise of Elizabeth's kindred introduced a far more intellectual, accomplished, and literary race into court favour than had for many generations flourished in so uncongenial a soil: and in this antechamber feud,

the pride of education and mind retaliated with juster sarcasm the pride of birth and sinews.

Amongst those opposed to the earl, and fit in all qualities to be the head of the new movement—if the expressive modern word be allowed us—stood at that moment in the very centre of the chamber, Anthony Woodville—in right of the rich heiress he had married, the Lord Scales. As when some hostile and formidable foe enters the meads where the flock grazes, the gazing herd gather slowly round their leader,—so grouped the queen's faction slowly, and by degrees, round this accomplished nobleman, at the prolonged sojourn of Warwick.

"Gramercy!" said the Lord Scales, in a somewhat affected intonation of voice, "the conjunction of the bear and the young lion is a parlous omen, for the which I could much desire we had a wise astrologer's reading."

"It is said," observed one of the courtiers, "that the Duke of Clarence much affects either the lands or the person of the Lady Isabel."

"A passably fair damozel," returned Anthony, "though a thought or so too marked and high in her lineaments, and wholly unlettered, no doubt; which were a pity, for George of Clarence hath some pretty taste in the arts and poesies. But as Occleve hath it—

'Gold, silver, jewel, cloth, beddyng, array,'

would make gentle George amorous of a worse-featured face than high-nosed Isabel; 'strange to spell or rede,' as I would wager my best destrier to a tailor's hobby, the damozel surely is."

"Notest thou yon gaudy popinjay?" whispered the Lord of St. John to one of his Touton comrades, as,

leaning against the wall, they overheard the sarcasms of Anthony, and the laugh of the courtiers, who glassed their faces and moods to his; "is the time so out of joint that Master Anthony Woodville can vent his scurrile japes on the heiress of Salisbury and Warwick, in the king's chamber?"

"And prate of spelling and reading, as if they were the cardinal virtues," returned his sullen companion. "By my halidame, I have two fair daughters at home, who will lack husbands, I trow, for they can only spin and be chaste—two maidenly gifts out of bloom with the White Rose."

In the meanwhile, unwitting, or contemptuous of the attention they excited, Warwick and Clarence continued yet more earnestly to confer.

"No, George, no," said the earl, who, as the descendant of John of Gaunt, and of kin to the king's blood, maintained, in private, a father's familiarity with the princes of York, though on state occasions, and when in the hearing of others, he sedulously marked his deference for their rank—"no, George, calm and steady thy hot mettle, for thy brother's and England's sake. I grieve as much as thou to hear that the queen does not spare even thee in her froward and unwomanly peevishness. But there is a glamour in this, believe me, that must melt away, soon or late, and our kingly Edward recover his senses."

"Glamour!" said Clarence; "thinkest thou, indeed, that her mother, Jacquetta, has bewitched the king? One word of thy belief in such spells, spread abroad amongst the people, would soon raise the same storm that blew Eleanor Cobham from Duke Humphrey's bed, along London streets in her penance-shift."

"Troth," said the earl, indifferently, "I leave such grave questions as these to prelate and priest; the glamour I spoke of is that of a fair face over a wanton heart; and Edward is not so steady a lover, that this should never wear out."

"It amates me much, noble cousin, that thou leavest the court in this juncture. The queen's heart is with Burgundy—the city's hate is with France—and when once thou art gone, I fear that the king will be teased into mating my sister with the Count of Charolois."

"Ho!" exclaimed Warwick, with an oath so loud that it rung through the chamber, and startled every ear that heard it. Then, perceiving his indiscretion, he lowered his tone into a deep and hollow whisper, and griped the prince's arm, almost fiercely, as he spoke.

"Could Edward so dishonour my embassy—so palter and juggle with my faith—so flout me in the eyes of Christendom, I would—I would—" he paused, and relaxed his hold of the duke, and added, with an altered voice—"I would leave his wife and his lemans, and yon things of silk, whom he makes peers (*that* is easy) but cannot make men—to guard his throne from the grandson of Henry V. But thy fears, thy zeal, thy love for me, dearest prince and cousin, make thee misthink Edward's kingly honour and knightly faith. I go with the sure knowledge that by alliance with France I shut the house of Lancaster from all hope of this roiaulme."

"Hadst thou not better, at least, see my sister Margaret—she has a high spirit, and she thinks thou mightst, at least, woo her assent, and tell her of the good gifts of her lord to be!"

"Are the daughters of York spoilt to this by the manners and guise of a court, in which beshrew me if I well know which the woman and whom the man? Is it not enough to give peace to broad England—root to her brother's stem? Is it not enough to wed the son of a king—the descendant of Charlemagne and St. Louis? Must I go bonnet in hand and simper forth, the sleek personals of the choice of her kith and house; swear the bridegroom's side-locks are as long as King Edward's, and that he bows with the grace of Master Anthony Woodville? Tell her this thyself, gentle Clarence, if thou wilt: all Warwick could say would but anger her ear, if she be the maid thou bespeakest her."

The Duke of Clarence hesitated a moment, and then, colouring slightly, said—"If, then, the daughter's hand be the gift of her kith alone, shall I have thy favour when the Lady Isabel——"

"George," interrupted Warwick, with a fond and paternal smile, "when we have made England safe, there is nothing the son of Richard of York can ask of Warwick in vain. Alas!" he added, mournfully, "thy father and mine were united in the same murtherous death, and I think they will smile down on us from their seats in heaven, when a happier generation cements that bloody union with a marriage bond!"

Without waiting for further parlance, the earl turned suddenly away, threw his cap on his towering head, and strode right through the centre of the whispering courtiers, who shrunk, louting low, from his haughty path, to break into a hubbub of angry exclamations, or sarcastic jests, at his unmannerly bearing, as his black plume disappeared in the arch of the vaulted door.

While such the scene in the interior chambers of the palace, Marmaduke, with the frank simpleness which belonged to his youth and training, had already won much favour and popularity, and he was laughing loud with a knot of young men by the shovel-board, when Warwick re-entered. The earl, though so disliked by the courtiers more immediately about the person of the king, was still the favourite of the less elevated knights and gentry who formed the subordinate household and retainers; and with these, indeed, his manner, so proud and arrogant to his foes and rivals, relapsed at once into the ease of the manly and idolised chief. He was pleased to see the way made by his young namesake, and lifting his cap, as he nodded to the group, and leant his arm upon Marmaduke's shoulder, he said—"Thanks, and hearty thanks, to you, knights and gentles, for your courteous reception of an old friend's young son. I have our king's most gracious permission to see him enrolled one of the court ye grace. Ah! Master Falconer, and how does thy worthy uncle?—braver knight never trod. What young gentleman is yonder?—a new face and a manly one; by your favour, present him!—the son of a Savile! Sir, on my return, be not the only Savile who shuns our table of Warwick Court. Master Dacres, commend me to the lady, your mother; she and I have danced many a measure together in the old time—we all live again in our children. Good den to you, sirs. Marmaduke, follow me to the office—you lodge in the palace. You are gentleman to the most gracious and, if Warwick lives, to the most puissant of Europe's sovereigns. I shall see Montagu at home; he shall instruct thee in thy duties, and requite thee for all discourtesies on the archery-ground."

BOOK III

IN WHICH THE HISTORY PASSES FROM THE KING'S COURT TO THE STUDENT'S CELL, AND RELATES THE PERILS THAT BEFELL A PHILOSOPHER FOR MEDDLING WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER I

THE SOLITARY SAGE AND THE SOLITARY MAID

While such the entrance of Marmaduke Nevile into a court, that if far less intellectual and refined than those of later days, was yet more calculated to dazzle the fancy, to sharpen the wit, and to charm the senses; for round the throne of Edward IV. chivalry was magnificent, intrigue restless, and pleasure ever on the wing—Sibyll had ample leisure, in her solitary home, to muse over the incidents that had preceded the departure of the young guest. Though she had rejected Marmaduke's proffered love, his tone, so suddenly altered—his abrupt, broken words and confusion—his farewell, so soon succeeding his passionate declaration—could not fail to wound that pride of woman which never sleeps till modesty is gone. But this made the least cause of the profound humiliation which bowed down her spirit. The meaning taunt conveyed in the rhyme of the *tymbesteres,* pierced her to the quick; the calm indifferent smile of the stranger, as he regarded her; the beauty of the dame he attended, woke

mingled and contrary feelings, but those of jealousy were, perhaps, the keenest: and in the midst of all she started to ask herself—if indeed she had suffered her vain thoughts to dwell too tenderly upon one from whom the vast inequalities of human life must divide her evermore—What to her was his indifference? Nothing—yet had she given worlds to banish that careless smile from her remembrance.

Shrinking, at last, from the tyranny of thoughts till of late unknown, her eye rested upon the gipsire which Alwyn had sent her by the old servant. The sight restored to her the holy recollection of her father, the sweet joy of having ministered to his wants. She put up the little treasure, intending to devote it all to Warner; and after bathing her heavy eyes, that no sorrow of hers might afflict the student, she passed, with a listless step, into her father's chamber.

There is, to the quick and mercurial spirits of the young, something of marvellous and preternatural in that life within life, which the strong passion of science and genius forms and feeds—that passion so much stronger than love, and so much more self-dependent —which asks no sympathy, leans on no kindred heart—which lives alone in its works and fancies, like a god amidst his creations.

The philosopher, too, had experienced a great affliction since they met last. In the pride of his heart, he had designed to show Marmaduke the mystic operations of his model, which had seemed that morning to open into life; and when the young man was gone, and he made the experiment alone, alas! he found that new progress but involved him in new difficulties. He had gained the first steps in the gigantic creation of modern days, and he was met by the obstacle that

baffled so long the great modern sage. There was the cylinder—there the boiler; yet, work as he would, the steam failed to keep the cylinder at work. And now, patiently as the spider re-weaves the broken web, his untiring ardour was bent upon constructing a new cylinder of other materials. "Strange," he said to himself, "that the heat of the mover aids not the movement;" and so, blundering near the truth, he laboured on.

Sibyll, meanwhile, seated herself abstractedly on a heap of fagots, piled in the corner, and seemed busy in framing characters on the dusty floor with the point of her tiny slipper. So fresh and fair and young she seemed, in that murky atmosphere, that strange scene, and beside that worn man, that it might have seemed to a poet as if the youngest of the Graces were come to visit Mulciber at his forge.

The man pursued his work—the girl renewed her dreams—the dark evening hour gradually stealing over both. The silence was unbroken, for the forge and the model were now at rest, save by the grating of Adam's file upon the metal, or by some ejaculation of complacency now and then vented by the enthusiast. So, apart from the many-noised, gaudy, babbling world without, even in the midst of that bloody, turbulent, and semi-barbarous time, went on (the one neglected and unknown, the other loathed and hated) the two movers of the ALL that continues the airy life of the Beautiful from age to age—the Woman's dreaming fancy, and the Man's active Genius.

CHAPTER II

MASTER ADAM WARNER GROWS A MISER, AND BEHAVES SHAMEFULLY

For two or three days nothing disturbed the outward monotony of the recluse's household. Apparently all had settled back as before the advent of the young cavalier. But Sibyll's voice was not heard singing, as of old, when she passed the stairs to her father's room. She sat with him in his work no less frequently and regularly than before; but her childish spirits no longer broke forth in idle talk or petulant movement, vexing the good man from his absorption and his toils. The little cares and anxieties, which had formerly made up so much of Sibyll's day, by forethought of provision for the morrow, were suspended; for the money transmitted to her by Alwyn, in return for the emblazoned MSS. was sufficient to supply their modest wants for months to come. Adam, more and more engrossed in his labours, did not appear to perceive the daintier plenty of his board, nor the purchase of some small comforts unknown for years. He only said one morning—"It is strange, girl, that as *that* gathers in life (and he pointed to the model), it seems already to provide, to my phantasy, the luxuries it will one day give to us all in truth. Methought my very bed last night seemed wondrous easy, and the coverings were warmer, for I woke not with the cold!"

"Ah!" thought the sweet daughter, smiling through moist eyes—"while my cares can smooth thy barren path through life, why should I cark and pine?"

Their solitude was now occasionally broken in the evenings by the visits of Nicholas Alwyn. The young

goldsmith was himself not ignorant of the simpler mathematics: he had some talent for invention, and took pleasure in the construction of horologes, though, properly speaking, not a part of his trade. His excuse for his visits was the wish to profit by Warner's mechanical knowledge; but the student was so wrapped in his own pursuits, that he gave but little instruction to his visitor. Nevertheless, Alwyn was satisfied, for he saw Sibyll. He saw her in the most attractive phase of her character, the loving, patient, devoted daughter; and the view of her household virtues affected more and more his honest English heart. But, ever awkward and embarrassed, he gave no vent to his feelings. To Sibyll he spoke little, and with formal constraint; and the girl, unconscious of her conquest, was little less indifferent to his visits than her abstracted father.

But all at once Adam woke to a sense of the change that had taken place—all at once he caught scent of gold, for his works were brought to a pause for want of some finer and more costly materials than the coins in his own possession (the remnant of Marmaduke's gift) enabled him to purchase. He had stolen out at dusk unknown to Sibyll, and lavished the whole upon the model, but in vain! The model in itself was, indeed, completed; his invention had mastered the difficulty that it had encountered. But Adam had complicated the contrivance by adding to it experimental proofs of the agency it was intended to exercise. It was necessary in that age, if he were to convince others, to show more than the principle of his engine, he must show also something of its effects; turn a mill without wind or water, or set in motion some mimic vehicle without other force than that the contrivance

itself supplied. And here, at every step, new obstacles arose. It was the misfortune to science in those days, not only that all books and mathematical instruments were enormously dear, but that the students, still struggling into light, through the glorious delusions of alchemy and mysticism—imagined that, even in simple practical operations, there were peculiar virtues in virgin gold and certain precious stones. A link in the process upon which Adam was engaged failed him; his ingenuity was baffled, his work stood still; and in poring again and again over the learned MSS.—alas! now lost, in which certain German doctors had sought to explain the pregnant hints of Roger Bacon, he found it inculcated that the axle of a certain wheel must be composed of a diamond. Now in truth, it so happened that Adam's contrivance, which (even without the appliances which were added in illustration of the theory) was infinitely more complicated than modern research has found necessary, did not even require the wheel in question, much less the absent diamond: it happened, also, that his understanding, which, though so obtuse in common life, was in these matters astonishingly clear, could not trace any mathematical operations by which the diamond axle would in the least correct the difficulty that had suddenly started up, and yet the accursed diamond began to haunt him—the German authority was so positive on the point, and that authority had in many respects been accurate. Nor was this all—the diamond was to be no vulgar diamond: it was to be endowed, by talismanic skill, with certain properties and virtues; it was to be for a certain number of hours exposed to the rays of the full moon; it was to be washed in a primitive and wondrous elixir, the making of which consumed no little

of the finest gold. This diamond was to be to the machine what the soul is to the body—a glorious, all-pervading, mysterious principle of activity and life. Such were the dreams that obscured the cradle of infant science! And Adam, with all his reasoning powers, his lore in the hard truths of mathematics, was but one of the giant children of the dawn. The magnificent phrases and solemn promises of the mystic Germans got firm hold of his fancy. Night and day, waking or sleeping, the diamond, basking in the silence of the full moon, sparkled before his eyes—meanwhile all was at a stand. In the very last steps of his discovery he was arrested. Then suddenly looking round for vulgar moneys to purchase the precious gem, and the materials for the soluble elixir, he saw that MONEY had been at work around him—that he had been sleeping softly and faring sumptuously. He was seized with a divine rage. How had Sibyll dared to secrete from him this hoard? how presumed to *waste* upon the base body what might have so profited the eternal mind? In his relentless ardour, in his sublime devotion and loyalty to his abstract idea, there was a devouring cruelty, of which this meek and gentle scholar was wholly unconscious. The grim iron model, like a Moloch, ate up all things—health, life, love; and its jaws now opened for his child. He rose from his bed—it was daybreak—he threw on his dressing-robe—he strode into his daughter's room—the grey twilight came through the comfortless, curtainless casement, deep-sunk into the wall. Adam did not pause to notice that the poor child, though she had provoked his anger, by refitting his dismal chamber, had spent nothing in giving a less rugged frown to her own.

The scanty worm-worn furniture, the wretched pallet, the poor attire folded decently beside—nothing save that inexpressible purity and cleanliness which, in the lowliest hovel, a pure and maiden mind gathers round it—nothing to distinguish the room of her whose childhood had passed in courts from the hut of the meanest daughter of drudgery and toil! No—he who had lavished the fortunes of his father and his child into the grave of his idea—no—he saw nothing of this self-forgetful penury—the diamond danced before him! He approached the bed—and oh! the contrast of that dreary room and peasant pallet, to the delicate, pure, enchanting loveliness of the sleeping inmate. The scanty covering left partially exposed the snow-white neck and rounded shoulder; the face was pillowed upon the arm, in an infantine grace; the face was slightly flushed, and the fresh red lips parted into a smile—for in her sleep the virgin dreamed—a happy dream! It was a sight to have touched a father's heart, to have stopped his footstep, and hushed his breath into prayer. And call not Adam hard—unnatural—that he was not then, as men far more harsh than he—for the father at that moment was not in his breast—the human man was gone—he himself, like his model, was a machine of iron!—his life was his one idea!

"Wake, child, wake!" he said, in a loud but hollow voice. "Where is the gold thou hast hidden from me? Wake—confess!"

Roused from her gracious dreams thus savagely, Sibyll started, and saw the eager, darkened face of her father. Its expression was peculiar and undefinable, for it was not threatening, angry, stern; there was a vacancy in the eyes, a strain in the features, and yet a

wild intense animation lighting and pervading all—it was as the face of one walking in his sleep, and, at the first confusion of waking, Sibyll thought indeed that such was her father's state. But the impatience with which he shook the arm he grasped, and repeated, as he opened convulsively his other hand, "The gold, Sibyll—the gold! Why didst thou hide it from me?" speedily convinced her that her father's mind was under the influence of the prevailing malady that made all its weakness and all its strength.

"My poor father!" she said, pityingly, "wilt thou not leave thyself the means whereby to keep strength and health for thine high hopes? Ah! father, thy Sibyll only hoarded her poor gains for thee!"

"The gold!" said Adam, mechanically, but in a softer voice—"all—all thou hast? How didst thou get it—how?"

"By the labours of these hands. Ah! do not frown on me!"

"Thou — the child of knightly fathers — *thou* labour!" said Adam, an instinct of his former state of gentle-born and high-hearted youth flashing from his eyes. "It was wrong in thee!"

"Dost thou not labour too?"

"Ay, but for the world. Well—the gold!"

Sibyll rose, and modestly throwing over her form the old mantle which lay on the pallet, passed to a corner of the room, and opening a chest, took from it the gipsire, and held it out to her father.

"If it please thee, dear and honoured sir, so be it; and Heaven prosper it in thy hands!"

Before Adam's clutch could close on the gipsire, a rude hand was laid on his shoulder, the gipsire was snatched from Sibyll, and the gaunt half-clad form of Old Madge interposed between the two.

"Eh, sir!" she said, in her shrill, cracked tone, "I thought, when I heard your door open, and your step hurrying down, you were after no good deeds. Fie, master, fie! I have clung to you when all reviled, and when starvation within and foul words without made all my hire; for I ever thought you a good and mild man, though little better than stark wode. But, augh! to rob your poor child thus—to leave her to starve and pine! We old folks are used to it. Look round—look round; I remember this chamber, when ye first came to your father's hall. Saints of heaven! There stood the brave bed all rustling with damask of silk; on those stone walls once hung fine arras of the Flemings—a marriage gift to my lady from Queen Margaret, and a mighty show to see, and good for the soul's comforts, with Bible stories wrought on it. Eh, sir! don't you call to mind your namesake, Master Adam, in his brave scarlet hosen, and Madam Eve, in her bonny blue kirtle and laced courtpie; and now —now look round, I say, and see what you have brought your child to!"

"Hush! hush! Madge, hush!" cried Sibyll, while Adam gazed in evident perturbation and awakening shame at the intruder, turning his eyes round the room as she spoke, and heaving from time to time short, deep sighs.

"But I will not hush," pursued the old woman; "I will say my say, for I love ye both, and I loved my poor mistress, who is dead and gone. Ah, sir, groan! it does you good. And now when this sweet damsel is growing up, now when you should think of saving a marriage dower for her (for no marriage where no pot boils), do you rend from her the little that she has drudged to gain!—She!—Oh, out on your heart? and

for what—for what, sir? For the neighbours to set fire to your father's house, and the little ones to——"

"Forbear, woman!" cried Adam, in a voice of thunder, "forbear! Leave us!" And he waved his hand as he spoke, with so unexpected a majesty that Madge was awed into sudden silence, and, darting a look of compassion at Sibyll, she hobbled from the room. Adam stood motionless an instant; but when he felt his child's soft arms round his neck—when he heard her voice struggling against tears, praying him not to heed the foolish words of the old servant—to take—to take all—that it would be easy to gain more—the ice of his philosophy melted at once—the man broke forth, and, clasping Sibyll to his heart, and kissing her cheek, her lips, her hands, he faltered out—"No! no! forgive me!—forgive thy cruel father! Much thought has maddened me, I think—it has indeed! Poor child, poor Sibyll," and he stroked her cheek gently, and with a movement of pathetic pity—"poor child, thou art pale—and so slight and delicate! And this chamber—and thy loneliness—and—ah!—my life hath been a curse to thee, yet I meant to bequeath it a boon to all!"

"Father, dear father, speak not thus. You break my heart. Here, here——take the gold—or rather, for thou must not venture out to insult again, let me purchase with it what thou needest. Tell me, trust me——"

"No!" exclaimed Adam, with that hollow energy by which a man resolves to impose restraint on himself; "I will not, for all that science ever achieved—I will not lay this shame on my soul: spend this gold on thyself—trim this room—buy thee raiment—all that thou needest—I order—I command it! And

hark thee, if thou gettest more, hide it from me—hide it well—men's desires are foul tempters! I never knew, in following wisdom, that I had a vice. I wake and find myself a miser and a robber!"

And with these words he fled from the girl's chamber, gained his own and locked the door.

CHAPTER III

A STRANGE VISITOR—ALL AGES OF THE WORLD BREED WORLD-BETTERS

Sibyll, whose soft heart bled for her father, and who now reproached herself for having concealed from him her little hoard, began hastily to dress that she might seek him out, and soothe the painful feelings which the honest rudeness of Madge had aroused. But before her task was concluded, there pealed a loud knock at the outer door. She heard the old housekeeper's quivering voice responding to a loud clear tone; and presently Madge herself ascended the stairs to Warner's room, followed by a man whom Sibyll instantly recognised—for he was not one easily to be forgotten—as their protector from the assault of the mob. She drew back hastily as he passed her door, and in some wonder and alarm awaited the descent of Madge. That venerable personage having with some difficulty induced her master to open his door and admit the stranger, came straight into her young lady's chamber. "Cheer up—cheer up, sweetheart," said the old woman, "I think better days will shine soon; for the honest man I have admitted says he is but come to tell Master Warner something that will redound much to his

profit. Oh! he is a wonderful fellow, this same Robin! You saw how he turned the cullions from burning the old house!"

"What! you know this man, Madge! What is he, and who?"

Madge looked puzzled. "That is more than I can say, sweet mistress. But though he has been but some weeks in the neighbourhood, they all hold him in high count and esteem. For why—it is said he is a rich man and a kind one. He does a world of good to the poor."

While Sibyll listened to such explanations as Madge could give her, the stranger, who had carefully closed the door of the student's chamber, after regarding Adam for a moment with silent but keen scrutiny, thus began:—

"When last we met, Adam Warner, it was with satchells on our backs. Look well at me!"

"Troth," answered Adam, languidly, for he was still under the deep dejection that had followed the scene with Sibyll, "I cannot call you to mind, nor seems it veritable that our school-days passed together, seeing that my hair is grey and men call me old; but thou art in all the lustihood of this human life."

"Nathless," returned the stranger, "there are but two years or so between thine age and mine. When thou wert poring over the crabbed text, and pattering Latin by the ell, dost thou not remember a lack-grace, good-for-naught, Robert Hilyard, who was always setting the school in an uproar, and was finally outlawed from that boy-world as he hath been since from the man's world, for inciting the weak to resist the strong?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Adam, with a gleam of something

like joy on his face; "art thou, indeed, that riotous, brawling, fighting, frank-hearted, bold fellow, Robert Hilyard? Ha! ha!—those were merry days! I have known none like them——"

The old schoolfellows shook hands heartily.

"The world has not fared well with thee in person or pouch, I fear me, poor Adam," said Hilyard; "thou canst scarcely have passed thy fiftieth year, and yet thy learned studies have given thee the weight of sixty; while I, though ever in toil and bustle, often wanting a meal, and even fearing the halter, am strong and hearty as when I shot my first fallow buck in the king's forest, and kissed the forester's pretty daughter. Yet, methinks, Adam, if what I hear of thy tasks be true, thou and I have each been working for one end; thou to make the world other than it is, and I to——"

"What! hast thou, too, taken nourishment from the bitter milk of Philosophy,—thou, fighting Rob?"

"I know not whether it be called philosophy—but marry, Edward of York would call it rebellion; they are much the same, for both war against rules established!" returned Hilyard, with more depth of thought than his careless manner seemed to promise. He paused, and laying his broad brown hand on Warner's shoulder, resumed—"Thou art poor, Adam!"

"Very poor—very—very!"

"Does thy philosophy disdain gold?"

"What can philosophy achieve without it? She is a hungry dragon, and her very food is gold!"

"Wilt thou brave some danger—thou wert ever a fearless boy when thy blood was up, though so meek and gentle—wilt thou brave some danger for large reward?"

"My life braves the scorn of men, the pinchings of

famine, and, it may be, the stake and the fagot. Soldiers brave not the dangers that are braved by a wise man in an unwise age!"

"Gramercy! thou hast a hero's calm aspect while thou speakest, and thy words move me! Listen! Thou wert wont when Henry of Windsor was King of England, to visit and confer with him on learned matters. He is now a captive in the Tower; but his gaolers permit him still to receive the visits of pious monks and harmless scholars. I ask thee to pay him such a visit, and for this office I am empowered, by richer men than myself, to award thee the guerdon of twenty broad pieces of gold."

"Twenty!—A mine!—A Tmolus!" exclaimed Adam, in uncontrollable glee. "Twenty!—O true friend!—then my work will be born at last!"

"But hear me further, Adam, for I will not deceive thee; the visit hath its peril! Thou must first see if the mind of King Henry, for king he is, though the usurper wear his holy crown, be clear and healthful. Thou knowest he is subject to dark moods—suspension of man's reason; and if he be, as his friends hope, sane and right-judging, thou wilt give him certain papers, which, after his hand has signed them, thou wilt bring back to me. If in this thou succeedest, know that thou mayst restore the royalty of Lancaster to the purple and the throne; that thou wilt have princes and earls for favourers and protectors to thy learned life; that thy fortunes and fame are made! Fail, be discovered—and Edward of York never spares!—Thy guerdon will be the nearest tree and the strongest rope!"

"Robert," said Adam, who had listened to this address with unusual attention, "thou dealest with me

plainly, and as man should deal with man. I know little of stratagem and polity, wars and kings; and save that King Henry, though passing ignorant in the mathematics, and more given to alchemists than to solid seekers after truth, was once or twice gracious to me, I could have no choice, in these four walls, between an Edward and a Henry on the throne. But I have a king whose throne is in mine own breast, and, alack, it taxeth me heavily, and with sore burdens."

"I comprehend," said the visitor, glancing round the room—"I comprehend—thou wantest money for thy books and instruments, and thy melancholic passion is thy sovereign. Thou wilt incur the risk?"

"I will," said Adam. "I would rather seek in the lion's den for what I lack, than do what I well nigh did this day."

"What crime was that, poor scholar?" said Robin, smiling.

"My child worked for *her* bread, and *my* luxuries—I would have robbed her, old schoolfellow. Ha!—ha!—what is cord and gibbet to one so tempted?"

A tear stood in the bright grey eyes of the bluff visitor.

"Ah! Adam," he said, sadly, "only by the candle held in the skeleton hand of Poverty can man read his own dark heart. But thou, Workman of Knowledge, hast the same interest as the poor, who dig and delve. Though strange circumstance hath made me the servant and emissary of Margaret, think not that I am but the varlet of the great."

Hilyard paused a moment, and resumed—

"Thou knowest, peradventure, that my race dates from an elder date than these Norman nobles, who

boast their robber-fathers. From the renowned Saxon Thane, who, free of hand and of cheer, won the name of Hildegardis,* our family took its rise. But under these Norman barons, we sank with the nation to which we belonged. Still were we called gentlemen, and still were dubbed knights. But, as I grew up to man's estate, I felt myself more Saxon than gentleman, and, as one of a subject and vassal race, I was a son of the Saxon people. My father, like thee, was a man of thought and bookcraft. I dare own to thee that he was a Lollard, and with the religion of those bold foes to priest-vice, goes a spirit that asks why the people should be evermore the spoil and prey of lords and kings. Early in my youth, my father, fearing rack and fagot in England, sought refuge in the Hans town of Lubeck. There I learned grave truths—how liberty can be won and guarded. Later in life I saw the republics of Italy, and I asked why they were so glorious in all the arts and craft of civil life, while the braver men of France and England seemed as savages by the side of the Florentine burgess, nay, of the Lombard vine-dresser. I saw that, even when those republics fell a victim to some tyrant or podesta, their men still preserved rights and uttered thoughts which left them more free and more great than the Commons of England, after all their boasted wars. I came back to my native land and settled in the North, as my franklin ancestry before me. The broad lands of my forefathers had devolved on the elder line, and gave a knight's fee to Sir Robert Hilyard, who fell afterwards at Touton for the Lancastrians. But I had won gold in the far countree, and

* Hildegardis, viz., old German, a person of noble or generous disposition. Wotton's "Baronetage," art. Hilyard, or Hildyard, of Pattrington.

I took farm and homestead near Lord Warwick's tower at Middleham. The feud between Lancaster and York broke forth; Earl Warwick summoned his retainers, myself amongst them, since I lived upon his land; I sought the great earl, and I told him boldly—him whom the Commons deemed a friend, and a foe to all malfaisance and abuse—I told him that the war he asked me to join seemed to me but a war of ambitious lords, and that I saw not how the Commons were to be bettered, let who would be king. The earl listened and deigned to reason; and when he saw I was not convinced, he left me to my will; for he is a noble chief, and I admired even his angry pride, when he said, 'Let no man fight for Warwick whose heart beats not in his cause.' I lived afterwards to discharge my debt to the proud earl, and show him how even the lion may be meshed, and how even the mouse may gnaw the net. But to my own tragedy. So I quitted those parts, for I feared my own resolution near so great a man: I made a new home not far from the city of York. So, Adam, when all the land around bristled with pike and gisarme, and while my own cousin and namesake, the head of my house, was winning laurels and wasting blood—I, thy quarrelsome, fighting friend—lived at home in peace with my wife and child (for I was now married, and wife and child were dear to me), and tilled my lands. But in peace I was active and astir, for my words inflamed the bosoms of labourers and peasants, and many of them, benighted as they were, thought with me. One day, I was absent from home, selling my grain in the marts of York—one day there entered the village a young captain, a boy-chief, Edward Earl of March, beating for recruits. Dost thou heed me, Adam? Well, man

—well, the peasants stood aloof from tromp and banner, and they answered, to all the talk of hire and fame, 'Robin Hilyard tells us we have nothing to gain but blows—leave us to hew and to delve.' Oh! Adam, this boy—this chief—the Earl of March, now crowned King Edward, made but one reply—'This Robin Hilyard must be a wise man—show me his house.' They pointed out the ricks, the barns, the homestead, and in five minutes all—were in flames. 'Tell the hilding, when he returns, that thus Edward of March, fair to friends and terrible to foes, rewards the coward who disaffects the men of Yorkshire to their chief.' And by the blazing rafters, and the pale faces of the silent crowd, he rode on his way to battle and the throne!"

Hilyard paused, and the anguish of his countenance was terrible to behold.

"I returned to find a heap of ashes—I returned to find my wife a maniac—I returned to find my child—my boy—great God!—he had run to hide himself, in terror at the torches and the grim men—they had failed to discover him, till, too late, his shrieks, amidst the crashing walls, burst on his mother's ear;—and the scorched, mangled, lifeless corpse, lay on that mother's bosom!"

Adam rose; his figure was transformed—not the stooping student, but the knight-descended man, seemed to tower in the murky chamber; his hand felt at his side, as for a sword; he stifled a curse, and Hilyard, in that suppressed low voice which evinces a strong mind in deep emotion, continued his tale.

"Blessed be the Divine Intercessor, the mother of the dead died too! Behold me, a lonely, ruined, wifeless, childless wretch! I made all the world my foe! The old love of liberty (alone left me) became a crime;

I plunged into the gloom of the forest, a robber-chief, sparing—no, never—never—never!—one York captain—one spurred knight—one belted lord! But the poor, my Saxon countrymen, *they* had suffered, and were safe!

"One dark twilight—thou hast heard the tale—every village minstrel sets it to his viol—a majestic woman—a hunted fugitive—crossed my path; she led a boy in her hand, a year or so younger than my murdered child. 'Friend!' said the woman, fearlessly, 'save the son of your king; I am Margaret, Queen of England!' I saved them both. From that hour the robber-chief, the Lollard's son, became a queen's friend. Here opened, at least, vengeance against the fell destroyer. Now see you why I seek you—why tempt you into danger? Pause, if you will, for my passion heats my blood;—and all the kings since Saul, it may be, are not worth one scholar's life! And yet," continued Hilyard, regaining his ordinary calm tone, "and yet, it seemeth to me, as I said at first, that all who labour have in this a common cause and interest with the poor. This woman-king, though bloody man, with his wine-cups and his harlots—this usurping York—his very existence flaunts the life of the sons of toil. In civil war and in broil, in strife that needs the arms of the people, the people shall get their own."

"I will go," said Adam, and he advanced to the door.

Hilyard caught his arm. "Why, friend, thou hast not even the documents, and how wouldst thou get access to the prison? Listen to me; or," added the conspirator, observing poor Adam's abstracted air, "or let me rather speak a word to thy fair daughter;

women have ready wit, and are the pioneers to the advance of men! Adam! Adam! thou art dreaming!" —He shook the philosopher's arm roughly.

"I heed you," said Warner, meekly.

"The first thing required," renewed Hilyard, "is a permit to see King Henry. This is obtained either from the Lord Worcester, governor of the Tower, a cruel man, who may deny it—or the Lord Hastings, Edward's chamberlain, a humane and gentle one, who will readily grant it. Let not thy daughter know why thou wouldst visit Henry; let her suppose it is solely to make report of his health to Margaret; let her not know there is scheming or danger; so, at least, her ignorance will secure her safety. But let her go to the lord chamberlain, and obtain the order for a learned clerk to visit the learned prisoner — to — ha! well thought of—this strange machine is, doubtless, the invention of which thy neighbours speak; this shall make thy excuse; thou wouldst divert the prisoner with thy mechanical—comprehendest thou, Adam?"

"Ah! King Henry will see the model, and when he is on the throne——"

"He will protect the scholar!" interrupted Hilyard. "Good! good! Wait here—I will confer with thy daughter."

He gently pushed aside Adam, opened the door, and on descending the stairs, found Sibyll by the large casement where she had stood with Marmaduke, and heard the rude stave of the *tymbesteres.*

The anxiety the visit of Hilyard had occasioned her was at once allayed, when he informed her that he had been her father's schoolmate, and desired to become his friend. And when he drew a moving picture of the exiled condition of Margaret and the young prince,

and their natural desire to learn tidings of the health of the deposed king, her gentle heart, forgetting the haughty insolence with which her royal mistress had often wounded and chilled her childhood, felt all the generous and compassionate sympathy the conspirator desired to awaken. "The occasion," added Hilyard, "for learning the poor captive's state now offers! He hath heard of your father's labours; he desires to learn their nature from his own lips. He is allowed to receive, by an order from King Edward's chamberlain, the visits of those scholars in whose converse he was ever wont to delight. Wilt thou so far aid the charitable work as to seek the Lord Hastings, and crave the necessary licence? Thou seest that thy father has wayward and abstract moods; he might forget that Henry of Windsor is no longer king, and might give him that title in speaking to Lord Hastings—a slip of the tongue which the law styles treason."

"Certes," said Sibyll, quickly, "if my father would seek the poor captive, I will be his messenger to my Lord Hastings. But, oh, sir! as thou hast known my father's boyhood, and as thou hopest for mercy in the last day, tempt to no danger one so guileless?"

Hilyard winced as he interrupted her hastily—

"There is no danger if thou wilt obtain the licence. I will say more—a reward awaits him, that will not only banish his poverty but save his life."

"His life!"

"Ay! seest thou not, fair mistress, that Adam Warner is dying, not of the body's hunger, but of the soul's? He craveth gold, that his toils may reap their guerdon. If that gold be denied, his toils will fret him to the grave!"

"Alas! alas!—it is true."

"That gold he shall honourably win! Nor is this all. Thou wilt see the Lord Hastings: he is less learned, perhaps, than Worcester—less dainty in accomplishments and gifts than Anthony Woodville, but his mind is profound and vast; all men praise him, save the queen's kin. He loves scholars; he is mild to distress; he laughs at the superstitions of the vulgar. Thou wilt see the Lord Hastings, and thou mayst interest him in thy father's genius and his fate!"

"There is frankness in thy voice, and I will trust thee," answered Sibyll. "When shall I seek this lord?"

"This day, if thou wilt. He lodges at the Tower, and gives access, it is said, to all who need his offices, or seek succour from his power."

"This day, then, be it!" answered Sibyll, calmly.

Hilyard gazed at her countenance, rendered so noble in its youthful resignation—in its soft firmness of expression, and muttering, "Heaven prosper thee, maiden; we shall meet to-morrow," descended the stairs, and quitted the house.

His heart smote him when he was in the street. "If evil should come to this meek scholar—to that poor child's father, it would be a sore sin to my soul. But no; I will not think it. The saints will not suffer this bloody Edward to triumph long; and in this vast chess-board of vengeance and great ends, we must move men to and fro, and harden our natures to the hazard of the game."

Sibyll sought her father; his mind had flown back to the model. He was already living in the life that the promised gold would give to the dumb thought. True that all the ingenious additions to the engine—additions that were to convince the reason and startle

the fancy, were not yet complete (for want, of course, of the diamond bathed in moonbeams)—but still there was enough in the inventions already achieved to excite curiosity and obtain encouragement. So, with care and diligence and sanguine hope, the philosopher prepared the grim model for exhibition to a man who had worn a crown, and might wear again. But with that innocent and sad cunning which is so common with enthusiasts of one idea, the sublime dwellers of the narrow border between madness and inspiration, Adam, amidst his excitement, contrived to conceal from his daughter all glimpse of the danger he run, of the correspondence of which he was to be the medium,—or rather, may we think that he had forgotten both! Not the stout Warwick himself, in the roar of battle, thought so little of peril to life and limb as that gentle student, in the reveries of his lonely closet: and therefore, all unsuspicious, and seeing but diversion to Adam's recent gloom of despair, an opening to all his bright prospects, Sibyll attired herself in her holiday garments, drew her wimple closely round her face, and summoning Madge to attend her, bent her way to the Tower. Near York House, within view of the Sanctuary and the Palace of Westminster, they took a boat, and arrived at the stairs of the Tower.

CHAPTER IV

LORD HASTINGS

William Lord Hastings was one of the most remarkable men of the age. Philip de Comines bears testimony to his high repute for wisdom and virtue. Born the son of a knight of ancient lineage but scanty

lands, he had risen, while yet in the prime of life, to a rank and an influence second, perhaps, only to the house of Nevile. Like Lord Montagu, he united in happy combination the talents of a soldier and a courtier. But as a statesman—a schemer—a thinker—Montagu, with all his craft, was inferior to Hastings. In this, the latter had but two equals—viz., George, the youngest of the Nevile brothers, Archbishop of York; and a boy, whose intellect was not yet fully developed, but in whom was already apparent to the observant the dawn of a restless, fearless, calculating, and subtle genius—that boy, whom the philosophers of Utrecht had taught to reason, whom the lessons of Warwick had trained to arms, was Richard, Duke of Gloucester, famous even now for his skill in the tilt-yard and his ingenuity in the rhetoric of the schools.

The manners of Lord Hastings had contributed to his fortunes. Despite the newness of his honours, even the haughtiest of the ancient nobles bore him no grudge, for his demeanour was at once modest and manly. He was peculiarly simple and unostentatious in his habits, and possessed that nameless charm which makes men popular with the lowly and welcome to the great.* But in that day a certain mixture of vice was necessary to success; and Hastings wounded no self-love by the assumption of unfashionable purism. He was regarded with small favour by the queen, who knew him as the companion of Edward in his pleas-

* On Edward's accession, so highly were the services of Hastings appreciated by the party, that not only the king, but many of the nobility, contributed to render his wealth equal to his new station, by grants of lands and moneys. Several years afterwards, when he went with Edward into France, no less than two lords, nine knights, fifty-eight squires, and twenty gentlemen joined his train.—Dugdale's "Baronage," p. 583. Sharon Turner's "History of England," vol. iii. p. 380.

ures, and at a later period accused him of enticing her faithless lord into unworthy affections. And certain it is, that he was foremost amongst the courtiers in those adventures which we call the excesses of gaiety and folly, though too often leading to Solomon's wisdom and his sadness. But profligacy, with Hastings, had the excuse of ardent passions: he had loved deeply, and unhappily, in his earlier youth, and he gave in to the dissipation of the time with the restless eagerness common to strong and active natures when the heart is not at ease; and under all the light fascination of his converse, or the dissipation of his life, lurked the melancholic temperament of a man worthy of nobler things. Nor was the courtly vice of the libertine the only drawback to the virtuous character assigned to Hastings by Comines. His experience of men had taught him something of the disdain of the cynic, and he scrupled not at serving his pleasures or his ambition by means which his loftier nature could not excuse to his clear sense.* Still, however, the world, which had deteriorated, could not harden, him. Few persons so able acted so frequently from impulse; the impulses were, for the most part, affectionate and generous, but then came the regrets of caution and experience; and Hastings summoned his intellect to correct the movement of his heart—in other words, reflection sought to undo what impulse had suggested. Though so successful a gallant, he had not acquired the ruthless egotism of the sensualist, and his conduct to women often evinced the weakness of giddy youth, rather than the cold deliberation of profligate man-

* See Comines, book vi., for a curious anecdote of what Mr. Sharon Turner happily calls "the moral coquetry" of Hastings;—an anecdote which reveals much of his character.

hood. Thus in his veriest vices there was a spurious amiability—a seductive charm; while, in the graver affairs of life, the intellectual susceptibility of his nature served but to quicken his penetration and stimulate his energies, and Hastings might have said, with one of his Italian contemporaries,—"That in subjection to the influences of women he had learned the government of men." In a word, his powers to attract, and his capacities to command, may be guessed by this,—that Lord Hastings was the only man Richard III. seems to have loved, when Duke of Gloucester,* and the only man he seems to have feared, when resolved to be King of England. Hastings was alone in the apartments assigned to him in the Tower, when his page, with a peculiar smile, announced to him the visit of a young donzell, who would not impart her business to his attendants.

The accomplished chamberlain looked up somewhat impatiently from the beautiful MS., enriched with the silver verse of Petrarch, which lay open on his table, and after muttering to himself—"It is only Edward to whom the face of a woman never is unwelcome," bade the page admit the visitor.

The damsel entered, and the door closed upon her.

"Be not alarmed, maiden," said Hastings, touched by the downcast bend of the hooded countenance, and the unmistakable and timid modesty of his visitor's bearing. "What hast thou to say to me?"

At the sound of his voice, Sibyll Warner started, and uttered a faint exclamation. The stranger of the pastime-ground was before her. Instinctively she drew the wimple yet more closely round her face, and

* Sir Thomas More, "Life of Edward V.," speaks of "the great love" Richard bore to Hastings.

laid her hand upon the bolt of the door as if in the impulse of retreat.

The nobleman's curiosity was roused. He looked again and earnestly on the form that seemed to shrink from his gaze; then rising slowly, he advanced, and laid his hand on her arm;—"Donzell, I recognise thee," he said, in a voice that sounded cold and stern—"What service wouldst thou ask me to render thee! Speak! Nay! I pray thee, speak."

"Indeed, good my lord," said Sibyll, conquering her confusion; and, lifting her wimple, her dark blue eyes met those bent on her, with fearless truth and innocence, "I knew not, and you will believe me—I knew not till this moment that I had such cause for gratitude to the Lord Hastings. I sought you but on the behalf of my father, Master Adam Warner, who would fain have the permission accorded to other scholars, to see the Lord Henry of Windsor, who was gracious to him in other days, and to while the duress of that princely captive with the show of a quaint instrument he has invented."

"Doubtless," answered Hastings, who deserved his character (rare in that day) for humanity and mildness —"doubtless it will pleasure me, nor offend his grace the king, to show all courtesy and indulgence to the unhappy gentleman and lord, whom the weal of England condemns us to hold incarcerate. I have heard of thy father, maiden, an honest and simple man, in whom we need not fear a conspirator; and of thee, young mistress, I have heard also, since we parted."

"Of me, noble sir?"

"Of thee," said Hastings, with a smile; and, placing a seat for her, he took from the table an illuminated MS. "I have to thank thy friend, Master Alwyn, for procuring me this treasure!"

"What, my lord!" said Sibyll, and her eyes glistened, "were you—you the—the——"

"The fortunate person whom Alwyn has enriched at so slight a cost. Yes. Do not grudge me my good fortune in this. Thou hast nobler treasures, methinks, to bestow on another!"

"My good lord!"

"Nay, I must not distress thee. And the young gentleman has a fair face; may it bespeak a true heart!"

These words gave Sibyll an emotion of strange delight. They seemed spoken sadly—they seemed to betoken a jealous sorrow—they awoke the strange, wayward woman-feeling, which is pleased at the pain that betrays the women's influence: the girl's rosy lips smiled maliciously. Hastings watched her, and her face was so radiant with that rare gleam of secret happiness—so fresh, so young, so pure, and withal so arch and captivating, that hackneyed and jaded as he was in the vulgar pursuit of pleasure, the sight moved better and tenderer feelings than those of the sensualist. "Yes," he muttered to himself, "there *are* some toys it were a sin to sport with and cast away amidst the broken rubbish of gone passions!"

He turned to the table, and wrote the order of admission to Henry's prison, and as he gave it to Sibyll, he said, "Thy young gallant, I see, is at the court now. It is a perilous ordeal, and especially to one for whom the name of Nevile opens the road to advancement and honour. Men learn betimes in courts to forsake Love for Plutus, and many a wealthy lord would give his heiress to the poorest gentleman who claims kindred to the Earl of Salisbury and Warwick."

"May my father's guest so prosper," answered Sibyll, "for he seems of loyal heart and gentle nature!"

"Thou art unselfish, sweet mistress," said Hastings; and, surprised by her careless tone, he paused a moment, "or art thou, in truth, indifferent? Saw I not thy hand in his, when even those loathly tymbesteres chanted warning to thee for loving, not above thy merits, but, alas, it may be, above thy fortunes?"

Sibyll's delight increased. Oh, then, he had not applied that hateful warning to himself! He guessed not her secret. She blushed, and the blush was so chaste and maidenly, while the smile that went with it was so ineffably animated and joyous, that Hastings exclaimed, with unaffected admiration, "Surely, fair donzell, Petrarch dreamed of thee, when he spoke of the woman-blush and the angel-smile of Laura. Woe to the man who would injure thee. Farewell! I would not see thee too often, unless I saw thee ever."

He lifted her hand to his lips, with a chivalrous respect, as he spoke; opened the door, and called his page to attend her to the gates.

Sibyll was more flattered by the abrupt dismissal than if he had knelt to detain her. How different seemed the world as her light step wended homeward!

CHAPTER V

MASTER ADAM WARNER AND KING HENRY THE SIXTH

The next morning Hilyard revisited Warner, with the letters for Henry. The conspirator made Adam reveal to him the interior mechanism of the Eureka, to which Adam, who had toiled all night, had appended one of the most ingenious contrivances he had as yet been enabled (*sans* the diamond) to accomplish,

for the better display of the agencies which the engine was designed to achieve. This contrivance was full of strange cells and recesses, in one of which the documents were placed. And there they lay, so well concealed as to puzzle the minutest search, if not aided by the inventor, or one to whom he had communicated the secrets of the contrivance.

After repeated warnings and exhortations to discretion, Hilyard then, whose busy, active mind had made all the necessary arrangements, summoned a stout-looking fellow, whom he had left below, and, with his aid, conveyed the heavy machine across the garden, to a back lane, where a mule stood ready to receive the burden.

"Suffer this trusty fellow to guide thee, dear Adam; he will take thee through ways where thy brutal neighbours are not likely to meet and molest thee. Call all thy wits to the surface. Speed and prosper!"

"Fear not," said Adam, disdainfully. "In the neighbourhood of kings, science is ever safe. Bless thee, child," and he laid his hand upon Sibyll's head, for she had accompanied them thus far in silence—"now go in."

"I go with thee, father," said Sibyll, firmly. "Master Hilyard, it is best so," she whispered; "what if my father fall into one of his reveries!"

"You are right: go with him, at least, to the Tower-gate. Hard by, is the house of a noble dame, and a worthy, known to our friend Hugh, where thou mayest wait Master Warner's return. It will not suit thy modesty and sex to loiter amongst the pages and soldiery in the yard. Adam, thy daughter must wend with thee."

Adam had not attended to this colloquy, and me-

chanically bowing his head, he set off, and was greatly surprised, on gaining the river side (where a boat was found large enough to accommodate not only the human passengers, but the mule and its burden), to see Sibyll by his side.

The imprisonment of the unfortunate Henry, though guarded with sufficient rigour against all chances of escape, was not, as the reader has perceived, at this period embittered by unnecessary harshness. His attendants treated him with respect, his table was supplied more abundantly and daintily than his habitual abstinence required, and the monks and learned men whom he had favoured, were, we need not repeat, permitted to enliven his solitude with their grave converse.

On the other hand, all attempts at correspondence between Margaret, or the exiled Lancastrians and himself, had been jealously watched, and when detected, the emissaries had been punished with relentless severity. A man named Hawkins had been racked for attempting to borrow money for the queen from the great London merchant, Sir Thomas Cook. A shoemaker had been tortured to death, with red-hot pincers, for abetting her correspondence with her allies. Various persons had been racked for similar offences, but the energy of Margaret, and the zeal of her adherents, were still unexhausted and unconquered.

Either unconscious or contemptuous of the perils to which he was subjected, the student, with his silent companions, performed the voyage, and landed in sight of the Fortress-Palatine. And now Hugh stopped before a house of good fashion, knocked at the door, which was opened by an old servitor, disappeared for a few moments, and returning, informed Sibyll, in

a meaning whisper, that the gentlewoman within was a good Lancastrian, and prayed the donzell to rest in her company till Master Warner's return.

Sibyll, accordingly, after pressing her father's hand without fear—for she had deemed the sole danger Adam risked was from the rabble by the way—followed Hugh into a fair chamber, strewed with rushes, where an aged dame, of noble air and aspect, was employed at her broidery frame. This gentlewoman, the widow of a nobleman who had fallen in the service of Henry, received her graciously, and Hugh then retired to complete his commission. The student, the mule, the model, and the porter, pursued their way to the entrance of that part of the gloomy palace inhabited by Henry. Here they were stopped, and Adam, after rummaging long in vain for the chamberlain's passport, at last happily discovered it, pinned to his sleeve, by Sibyll's forethought. On this a gentleman was summoned to inspect the order, and in a few moments Adam was conducted to the presence of the illustrious prisoner.

"And what," said a subaltern officer, lolling by the archway of the (now styled) "Bloody Tower," hard by the turret devoted to the prisoner,* and speaking to Adam's guide, who still mounted guard by the model, —"what may be the precious burden of which thou art the convoy?"

"Marry, sir," said Hugh, who spoke in the strong Yorkshire dialect, which we are obliged to render into intelligible English—"marry, I weet not,—it is some curious puppet-box, or quiet contrivance, that Master Warner, whom they say is a very deft and ingenious personage, is permitted to bring hither for the Lord Henry's diversion."

* The Wakefield Tower.

"A puppet-box!" said the officer, with much animated curiosity. "Fore the mass! that must be a pleasant sight. Lift the lid, fellow!"

"Please your honour, I do not dare," returned Hugh—"I but obey orders."

"Obey mine, then. Out of the way!" and the officer lifted the lid of the pannier with the point of his dagger, and peeped within. He drew back, much disappointed—"Holy mother!" said he, "this seemeth more like an instrument of torture, than a juggler's merry device. It looks parlous ugly!"

"Hush!" said one of the lazy bystanders, with whom the various gateways and courts of the palace-fortress were crowded, "hush!—thy cap and thy knee, sir!"

The officer started; and, looking round, perceived a young man of low stature, followed by three or four knights and nobles, slowly approaching towards the arch, and every cap in the vicinity was off, and every knee bowed.

The eye of this young man was already bent, with a searching and keen gaze, upon the motionless mule, standing patiently by the Wakefield Tower; and turning from the mule to the porter, the latter shrunk, and grew pale, at that dark, steady, penetrating eye, which seemed to pierce at once into the secrets and hearts of men.

"Who may this young lord be?" he whispered to the officer.

"Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, man," was the answer. "Uncover, varlet!"

"Surely," said the prince, pausing by the gate, "surely this is no sumpter-mule, bearing provisions to the Lord Henry of Windsor. It would be but poor

respect to that noble person, whom, alas the day! his grace the king is unwillingly compelled to guard from the malicious designs of rebels and mischief-seekers, that one not bearing the king's livery should attend to any of the needful wants of so worshipful a lord and guest!"

"My lord," said the officer at the gate, "one Master Adam Warner hath just, by permission, been conducted to the Lord Henry's presence, and the beast beareth some strange and grim-looking device for my lord's diversion."

The singular softness and urbanity which generally characterised the Duke of Gloucester's tone and bearing at that time,—which, in a court so full of factions and intrigues made him the enemy of none, and seemingly the friend of all, and, conjoined with abilities already universally acknowledged, had given to his very boyhood a pre-eminence of grave repute and good opinion, which, indeed, he retained till the terrible circumstances connected with his accession to the throne, under the bloody name of Richard the Third, roused all men's hearts and reasons into the persuasion that what before had seemed virtue was but dissimulation; —this singular sweetness, we say, of manner and voice, had in it, nevertheless, something that imposed, and thrilled, and awed. And, in truth, in our common and more vulgar intercourse with life, we must have observed, that where external gentleness of bearing is accompanied by a repute for iron will, determined resolution, and a serious, profound, and all-inquiring intellect, it carries with it a majesty wholly distinct from that charm which is exercised by one whose mildness of nature corresponds with the outward humility; and, if it does not convey the notion of falseness, bears

the appearance of that perfect self-possession, that calm repose of power, which intimidates those it influences far more than the imperious port and the loud voice. And they who best knew the duke, knew also that, despite this general smoothness of mien, his temperament was naturally irritable, quick, and subject to stormy gusts of passion, the which defects his admirers praised him for labouring hard and sedulously to keep in due control. Still, to a keen observer, the constitutional tendencies of that nervous temperament were often visible, even in his blandest moments—even when his voice was most musical, his smile most gracious. If something stung, or excited him, an uneasy gnawing of the nether lip, a fretful playing with his dagger, drawing it up and down from its sheath,* a slight twitching of the muscles of the face, and a quiver of the eyelid, betokened the efforts he made at self-command; and now, as his dark eyes rested upon Hugh's pale countenance, and then glanced upon the impassive mule, dozing quietly under the weight of poor Adam's model, his hand mechanically sought his dagger-hilt, and his face took a sinister and sombre expression.

"Thy name, friend?"

"Hugh Withers—please you, my lord duke."

"Um! North country, by thine accent. Dost thou serve this Master Warner?"

"No, my lord, I was only hired with my mule to carry——"

"Ah! true! to carry what thy pannier contains; open it. Holy Paul! a strange jonglerie indeed! This Master Adam Warner,—methinks, I have heard his name—a learned man—um—let me see his safe con-

* Pol. Virg. 565.

duct. Right—it is Lord Hastings's signature." But still the prince held the passport, and still suspiciously eyed the Eureka and its appliances, which, in their complicated and native ugliness of doors, wheels, pipes, and chimney, were exposed to his view. At this moment one of the attendants of Henry descended the stairs of the Wakefield Tower, with a request that the model might be carried up to divert the prisoner.

Richard paused a moment, as the officer hesitatingly watched his countenance before giving the desired permission. But the prince, turning to him, and smoothing his brow, said mildly—"Certes! all that can divert the Lord Henry must be innocent pastime. And I am well pleased that he hath this cheerful mood for recreation. It gainsayeth those who would accuse us of rigour in his durance. Yes, this warrant is complete and formal;" and the prince returned the passport to the officer, and walked slowly on through that gloomy arch ever more associated with Richard of Gloucester's memory, and beneath the very room in which our belief yet holds that the infant sons of Edward IV. breathed their last; still, as Gloucester moved, he turned and turned, and kept his eye furtively fixed upon the porter.

"Lovell," he said to one of the gentlemen who attended him, and who was among the few admitted to his more peculiar intimacy—"that man is of the north."

"Well, my lord?"

"The north was always well affected to the Lancastrians. Master Warner hath been accused of witchcraft. Marry, I should like to see his device—um; Master Catesby, come hither — approach, sir. Go back, and the instant Adam Warner and his contriv-

ance are dismissed—bring them both to me in the king's chamber. Thou understandest? We too would see his device—and let neither man nor mechanical, when once they re-appear, out of thine eye's reach. For divers and subtle are the contrivances of treasonable men!"

Catesby bowed, and Richard, without speaking further, took his way to the royal apartments, which lay beyond the White Tower, towards the river, and are long since demolished.

Meanwhile the porter, with the aid of one of the attendants, had carried the model into the chamber of the august captive. Henry, attired in a loose robe, was pacing the room with a slow step, and his head sunk on his bosom,—while Adam, with much animation, was enlarging on the wonders of the contrivance he was about to show him. The chamber was commodious, and furnished with sufficient attention to the state and dignity of the prisoner; for Edward, though savage and relentless when his blood was up, never descended into the cool and continuous cruelty of detail.

The chamber may yet be seen; its shape a spacious octagon; but the walls now rude and bare, were then painted and blazoned with scenes from the Old Testament. The door opened beneath the pointed arch in the central side (not where it now does), giving entrance from a small ante-room, in which the visitor now beholds the receptacle for old rolls and papers. At the right, on entering, where now, if our memory mistake not, is placed a press, stood the bed, quaintly carved, and with hangings of damascene. At the farther end, the deep recess which faced the ancient door was fitted up as a kind of oratory. And there were to

be seen, besides the crucifix and the mass-book, a profusion of small vessels of gold and crystal, containing the relics, supposed or real, of saint and martyr, treasures which the deposed king had collected in his palmier days at a sum that, in the minds of his followers, had been better bestowed on arms and war-steeds. A young man named Allerton—one of the three gentlemen personally attached to Henry, to whom Edward had permitted general access, and who, in fact, lodged in other apartments of the Wakefield Tower, and might be said to share his captivity—was seated before a table, and following the steps of his musing master, with earnest and watchful eyes.

One of the small spaniels employed in springing game—for Henry, despite his mildness, had been fond of all the sports of the field—lay curled round on the floor, but started up, with a shrill bark, at the entrance of the bearer of the model, while a starling, in a cage by the window, seemingly delighted at the disturbance, flapped his wings, and screamed out, " Bad men!—Bad world!—Poor Henry! "

The captive paused at that cry, and a sad and patient smile of inexpressible melancholy and sweetness hovered over his lips. Henry still retained much of the personal comeliness he possessed at the time when Margaret of Anjou, the theme of minstrel and minnesinger, left her native court of poets for the fatal throne of England. But beauty, usually so popular and precious a gift to kings, was not in him of that order which commanded the eye and moved the admiration of a turbulent people and a haughty chivalry. The features, if regular, were small; their expression meek and timid; the form, though tall, was not firm-knit and muscular; the lower limbs were too thin, the body had too much

flesh, the delicate hands betrayed the sickly paleness of feeble health; there was a dreamy vagueness in the clear soft blue eyes, and a listless absence of all energy in the habitual bend, the slow, heavy, sauntering tread —all about that benevolent aspect, that soft voice, that resigned mien, and gentle manner, spoke the exquisite unresisting goodness, which provoked the lewd to taunt, the hardy to despise, the insolent to rebel:—for the foes of a king in stormy times are often less his vices than his virtues.

"And now, good my lord," said Adam, hastening, with eager hands, to assist the bearer in depositing the model on the table—"now will I explain to you the contrivance which it hath cost me long years of patient toil to shape from thought into this iron form."

"But first," said Allerton, "were it not well that these good people withdrew? A contriver likes not others to learn his secret ere the time hath come to reap its profits."

"Surely—surely!" said Adam, and alarmed at the idea thus suggested, he threw the folds of his gown over the model.

The attendant bowed and retired; Hugh followed him, but not till he had exchanged a significant look with Allerton.

As soon as the room was left clear to Adam, the captive, and Master Allerton, the last rose, and looking hastily round the chamber, approached the mechanician. "Quick, sir!" said he in a whisper, "we are not often left without witnesses."

"Verily," said Adam, who had now forgot kings and stratagems, plots and counterplots, and was all absorbed in his invention, "verily, young man, hurry not in this fashion—I am about to begin. Know, my

lord," and he turned to Henry, who, with an indolent, dreamy gaze, stood contemplating the Eureka,— "know that more than a hundred years before the Christian era, one Hero, an Alexandrian, discovered the force produced by the vapour begot by heat on water. That this power was not unknown to the ancient sages, witness the contrivances, not otherwise to be accounted for, of the heathen oracles; but to our great countryman and predecessor, Roger Bacon, who first suggested that vehicles might be drawn without steeds or steers, and ships might——"

"Marry, sir," interrupted Allerton, with great impatience, "it is not to prate to us of such trivial fables of Man, or such wanton sports of the Foul Fiend, that thou hast risked life and limb. Time is precious. I have been previsedthat thou hast letters for King Henry; produce them—quick!"

A deep glow of indignation had overspread the enthusiast's face at the commencement of this address; but the close reminded him, in truth, of his errand.

"Hot youth," said he, with dignity, "a future age may judge differently of what thou deemest trivial fables, and may rate high this poor invention when the brawls of York and Lancaster are forgotten."

"Hear him," said Henry, with a soft smile, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the young man, who was about to utter a passionate and scornful retort— "Hear him, sir." Have I not often and ever said this same thing to thee? We children of a day imagine our contests are the sole things that move the world. Alack! our fathers thought the same; and they and their turmoils sleep forgotten! Nay, Master Warner," —for here Adam, poor man, awed by Henry's mildness into shame at his discourteous vaunting, began to

apologise,—"nay, sir, nay—thou art right to contemn our bloody and futile struggles for a crown of thorns: for

"Kingdoms are but cares,
State is devoid of stay;
Riches are ready snares,
And hasten to decay." *

And yet, sir, believe me, thou hast no cause for vain glory in thine own craft and labours; for to wit and to lere there are the same vanity and vexation of spirit as to war and empire. Only, O would-be wise man, only when we muse on Heaven, do our souls ascend from the fowler's snare!"

"My saint-like liege," said Allerton, bowing low, and with tears in his eyes, "thinkest thou not that thy very disdain of thy rights makes thee more worthy of them? If not for thine, for thy son's sake—remember that the usurper sits on the throne of the conqueror of Agincourt!—Sir Clerk, the letters."

Adam, already anxious to retrieve the error of his first forgetfulness, here, after a moment's struggle for the necessary remembrance, drew the papers from the labyrinthine receptacle which concealed them; and Henry uttered an exclamation of joy as, after cutting the silk, his eye glanced over the writing—

"My Margaret! my wife!" Presently he grew pale, and his hands trembled. "Saints defend her!—Saints defend her! She is here, disguised, in London!"

"Margaret! our hero-queen! the manlike woman!" exclaimed Allerton, clasping his hands—"Then be

* Lines ascribed to Henry VI., with commendation "as a prettie verse," by Sir John Harrington, in the "Nugæ Antiquæ." They are also given, with little alteration, to the unhappy king by Baldwin, in his tragedy of "King Henry VI."

sure that——" He stopped, and abruptly taking Adam's arm, drew him aside, while Henry continued to read—"Master Warner, we may trust thee—thou art one of us—thou art sent here, I know, by Robin of Redesdale—we may trust thee?"

"Young sir," replied the philosopher, gravely, "the fears and hopes of power are not amidst the uneasier passions of the student's mind. I pledged myself but to bear these papers hither, and to return with what may be sent back."

"But thou didst this for love of the cause, the truth, and the right?"

"I did it partly from Hilyard's tale of wrong—but partly, also, for the gold," answered Adam, simply; and his noble air, his high brow, the serene calm of his features, so contrasted with the meanness implied in the latter words of his confession, that Allerton stared at him amazed, and without reply.

Meanwhile Henry had concluded the letter, and with a heavy sigh glanced over the papers that accompanied it.

"Alack! alack! more turbulence, more danger, and disquiet—more of my people's blood!" He motioned to the young man, and drawing him to the window, while Adam returned to his model, put the papers in his hand. "Allerton," he said, "thou lovest me, but thou art one of the few in this distraught land who love also God. Thou art not one of the warriors, the men of steel. Counsel me. See—Margaret demands my signature to these papers; the one, empowering and craving the levy of men and arms in the northern counties; the other, promising free pardon to all who will desert Edward; the third—it seemeth to me more strange and less kinglike than the others,—undertak-

ing to abolish all the imposts and all the laws that press upon the commons, and (is this a holy and pious stipulation?) to inquire into the exactions and persecutions of the priesthood of our Holy Church!"

"Sire!" said the young man, after he had hastily perused the papers, "my lady liege showeth good argument for your assent to two, at least, of these undertakings. See the names of fifty gentlemen ready to take arms in your cause if authorised by your royal warrant. The men of the North are malcontent with the usurper, but they will not yet stir, unless at your own command. Such documents will, of course, be used with discretion, and not to imperil your grace's safety."

"My safety!" said Henry, with a flash of his father's hero-soul in his eyes—"of *that* I think not! If I have small courage to attack, I have some fortitude to bear. But, three months after these be signed, how many brave hearts will be still!—how many stout hands be dust! O Margaret! Margaret! why temptest thou? Wert thou so happy when a queen?"

The prisoner broke from Allerton's arm, and walked, in great disorder and irresolution, to and fro the chamber; and strange it was to see the contrast between himself and Warner—both, in so much alike—both so purely creatures out of the common world, so gentle—abstract—so utterly living in the life apart: and now, the student so calm, the prince so disturbed! The contrast struck Henry himself! He paused abruptly, and, folding his arms, contemplated the philosopher, as, with an affectionate complacency, Adam played and toyed, as it were, with his beloved model; now opening and shutting again its doors—now brushing away with his sleeve some particles of dust that had

settled on it—now retiring a few paces to gaze the better on its stern symmetry.

"Oh, my Allerton!" cried Henry, "behold! the kingdom a man makes out of his own mind is the only one that it delighteth man to govern! Behold, he is lord over its springs and movements; its wheels revolve and stop at his bidding. Here, here, alone, God never asketh the ruler—'Why was the blood of thousands poured forth like water, that a worm might wear a crown?'"

"Sire," said Allerton, solemnly, "when our Heavenly King appoints his anointed representative on earth, he gives to that human delegate no power to resign the ambassade and trust. What suicide is to a man, abdication is to a king! How canst thou dispose of thy son's rights? And what become of those rights if thou wilt prefer for him the exile—for thyself, the prison,—when one effort may restore a throne!"

Henry seemed struck by a tone of argument that suited both his own mind and the reasoning of the age. He gazed a moment on the face of the young man, muttered to himself, and suddenly moving to the table, signed the papers, and restored them to Adam, who mechanically replaced them in their iron hiding-place:—

"Now begone, sir!" whispered Allerton, afraid that Henry's mind might again change.

"Will not my lord examine the engine?" asked Warner, half-beseechingly.

"Not to-day! See, he has already retired to his oratory—he is in prayer!" and, going to the door, Allerton summoned the attendants in waiting to carry down the model.

"Well, well—patience, patience—thou shalt have

thine audience at last," muttered Adam, as he retired from the room, his eyes fixed upon the neglected infant of his brain.

CHAPTER VI

HOW, ON LEAVING KING LOG, FOOLISH WISDOM RUNS A-MUCK ON KING STORK

At the outer door of the Tower by which he had entered, the philosopher was accosted by Catesby—a man who, in imitation of his young patron, exhibited the soft and oily manner which concealed intense ambition and innate ferocity.

"Worshipful, my master," said he, bowing low, but with a half sneer on his lips, "the king and his Highness the Duke of Gloucester have heard much of your strange skill, and command me to lead you to their presence. Follow, sir, and you, my men, convey this quaint contrivance to the king's apartments."

With this, not waiting for any reply, Catesby strode on. Hugh's face fell—he turned very pale, and, imagining himself unobserved, turned round to slink away. But Catesby, who seemed to have eyes at the back of his head, called out, in a mild tone—

"Good fellow, help to bear the mechanical—you, too, may be needed."

"Cog's wounds!" muttered Hugh, "an' I had but known what it was to set my foot in a king's palace! Such walking may do for the silken shoon, but the hobnail always gets into a hobble." With that, affecting a cheerful mien, he helped to replace the model on the mule.

Meanwhile, Adam, elated, poor man! at the flattery

of the royal mandate, persuaded that his fame had reached Edward's ears, and chafed at the little heed paid by the pious Henry to his great work, stalked on, his head in the air. "Verily," mused the student, "King Edward may have been a cruel youth, and over hasty; it is horrible to think of Robin Hilyard's calamities! But men do say he hath an acute and masterly comprehension. Doubtless, he will perceive at a glance how much I can advantage his kingdom." With this, we grieve to say, selfish reflection—which, if the thought of his model could have slept awhile, Adam would have blushed to recall, as an affront to Hilyard's wrongs—the philosopher followed Catesby across the spacious yard, along a narrow passage, and up a winding turret-stair, to a room in the third story, which opened at one door into the king's closet, at the other into the spacious gallery, which was already a feature in the plan of the more princely houses. In another minute Adam and his model were in the presence of the king. The part of the room in which Edward sate was distinguished from the rest by a small eastern carpet on the floor (a luxury more in use in the palaces of that day than it appears to have been a century later);* a table was set before him, on which the model was placed. At his right hand sat Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, the queen's mother; at his left, Prince Richard. The duchess, though not without the remains of beauty, had a stern, haughty, scornful expression, in her sharp aquiline features, compressed lips, and imperious eye. The paleness of her complexion, and the careworn anxious lines of her countenance, were ascribed by the vulgar to studies of no

* See the Narrative of the Lord Grauthuse, before referred to.

holy cast. Her reputation for sorcery and witchcraft was daily increasing, and served well the purpose of the discontented barons, whom the rise of her children mortified and enraged.

"Approach, Master—— What say you his name is, Richard?"

"Adam Warner," replied the sweet voice of the Duke of Gloucester, "of excellent skill in the mathematics."

"Approach, sir, and show us the nature of this notable invention."

"I desire nothing better, my lord king," said Adam, boldly. "But first, let me crave a small modicum of fuel. Fire, which is the life of the world, as the wise of old held it, is also the soul of this—my mechanical."

"Peradventure," whispered the duchess, "the wizard desireth to consume us!"

"More likely," replied Richard, in the same undertone, "to consume whatever of treasonable nature may lurk concealed in his engine."

"True," said Edward, and then, speaking aloud, "Master Warner," he added, "put thy puppet to its purpose—without fire;—we will it."

"It is impossible, my lord," said Adam, with a lofty smile. "Science and nature are more powerful than a king's word."

"Do not say that in public, my friend," said Edward drily, "or we must hang thee! I would not my subjects were told anything so treasonable. Howbeit, to give thee no excuse in failure, thou shalt have what thou needest."

"But surely not in our presence," exclaimed the duchess. "This may be a device of the Lancastrians for our perdition."

"As you please, belle mère," said Edward, and he motioned to a gentleman, who stood a few paces behind his chair, and who, from the entrance of the mechanician, had seemed to observe him with intense interest. "Master Nevile, attend this wise man; supply his wants, and hark, in thy ear, watch well that he abstract nothing from the womb of his engine—observe what he doeth—be all eyes." Marmaduke bowed low to conceal his change of countenance, and, stepping forward, made a sign to Adam to follow him.

"Go also, Catesby," said Richard to his follower, who had taken his post near him, "and clear the chamber."

As soon as the three members of the royal family were left alone, the king, stretching himself, with a slight yawn, observed, "This man looks not like a conspirator, brother Richard, though his sententiary as to nature and science lacked loyalty and respect."

"Sire and brother," answered Richard, "great leaders often dupe their own tools; at least, meseemeth that they would reason well so to do. Remember, I have told thee that there is strong cause to suppose Margaret to be in London. In the suburbs of the city has also appeared, within the last few weeks, that strange and dangerous person, whose very objects are a mystery, save that he is our foe,—Robin of Redesdale. The men of the North have exhibited a spirit of insurrection; a man of that country attends this reputed wizard, and he himself was favoured in past times by Henry of Windsor. These are ominous signs when the conjunctions be considered!"

"It is well said; but a fair day for breathing our palfrey is half spent!" returned the indolent prince. "By'r lady! I like the fashion of thy supertunic well,

Richard; but thou hast it too much puffed over the shoulders."

Richard's dark eye shot fire, and he gnawed his lip as he answered—"God hath not given to me the fair shape of my kinsmen!"

"Thy pardon, dear boy," said Edward, kindly; "yet little needest thou our broad backs and strong sinews, for thou hast a tongue to charm women, and a wit to command men."

Richard bowed his face, little less beautiful than his brother's, though wholly different from it in feature, for Edward had the long oval countenance, the fair hair, the rich colouring, and the large outline of his mother, the Rose of Raby. Richard, on the contrary, had the short face, the dark brown locks, and the pale olive complexion of his father, whom he alone of the royal brothers strikingly resembled.* The cheeks, too, were somewhat sunken, and already, though scarcely past childhood, about his lips were seen the lines of thoughtful manhood. But then those small features, delicately aquiline, were so regular—that dark eye was so deep, so fathomless in its bright musing intelligence—that quivering lip was at once so beautifully formed and so expressive of intellectual subtlety and haughty will—and that pale forehead was so massive, high, and majestic, that when, at a later period, the Scottish prelate † commended Richard's "princely

* Pol. Virg. 544.

† Archibald Quhitlaw.—"Faciem tuam summo imperio principatu dignam inspicit, quam moralis et heroica, virtus illustrat," &c.—We need scarcely observe that even a Scotchman would not have risked a public compliment to Richard's face, if so inappropriate as to seem a sarcasm, especially as the orator immediately proceeds to notice the shortness of Richard's stature—a comment not likely to have been peculiarly acceptable. In the Rous Roll, the portrait of Richard repre-

countenance," the compliment was not one to be disputed, much less contemned. But now as he rose, obedient to a whisper from the duchess, and followed her to the window, while Edward appeared engaged in admiring the shape of his own long upturned shoes, those defects in his shape which the popular hatred and the rise of the House of Tudor exaggerated into the absolute deformity, that the unexamining ignorance of modern days, and Shakespeare's fiery tragedy, have fixed established caricature, were sufficiently apparent. Deformed or hunchbacked, we need scarcely say he was not, for no man so disfigured could have possessed that great personal strength which he invariably exhibited in battle, despite the comparative slightness of his frame. He was considerably below the ordinary height, which the great stature of his brother rendered yet more disadvantageous by contrast, but his lower limbs were strong-jointed and muscular. Though the back was not curved, yet one shoulder was slightly higher than the other, which was the more observable from the evident pains that he took to disguise it, and the gorgeous splendour, savouring of personal coxcombry—from which no Plantagenet was ever free,—that he exhibited in his dress. And as, in a warlike age, the physical conformation of men is always critically regarded, so this defect, and that of his low stature, were not so much redeemed as they would be in our day by the beauty and intelligence of his face. Added to this, his neck was short, and a habit of bending his head on his bosom (arising either from thought, or the affectation of humility, which was a part of his

sents him as undersized, but compactly and strongly built, and without any sign of deformity, unless the inelegant defect of a short neck can be so called.

character), made it seem shorter still. But this peculiarity, while taking from the grace, added to the strength of his frame, which, spare, sinewy, and compact, showed to an observer that power of endurance —that combination of solid stubbornness and active energy, which, at the battle of Barnet, made him no less formidable to encounter than the ruthless sword of the mighty Edward.

"So, prince," said the duchess, "this new gentleman of the king's is, it seems, a Nevile. When will Edward's high spirit cast off that hateful yoke?"

Richard sighed and shook his head. The duchess, encouraged by these signs of sympathy, continued—

"Your brother Clarence, Prince Richard, despises us, to cringe to the proud earl. But you——"

"I am not suitor to the Lady Isabel; Clarence is overlavish, and Isabel has a fair face and a queenly dowry."

"May I perish," said the duchess, "ere Warwick's daughter wears the baudekin of royalty, and sits in as high a state as the queen's mother! Prince, I would fain confer with thee; we have a project to abase and banish this hateful lord. If you but join us, success is sure; the Count of Charolois——"

"Dear lady," interrupted Richard, with an air of profound humility, "tell me nothing of plot or project; my years are too few for such high and subtle policy; and the Lord Warwick hath been a leal friend to our House of York."

The duchess bit her lip—"Yet I have heard you tell Edward that a subject can be too powerful?"

"Never, lady! *you* have never heard me."

"Then Edward has told Elizabeth that you so spoke."

"Ah!" said Richard, turning away with a smile; "I see that the king's conscience hath a discreet keeper. Pardon me. Edward, now that he hath sufficiently surveyed his shoon, must marvel at this prolonged colloquy. And see, the door opens."

With this, the duke slowly moved to the table, and resumed his seat.

Marmaduke, full of fear for his ancient host, had in vain sought an opportunity to address a few words of exhortation to him to forbear all necromancy, and to abstain from all perilous distinctions between the power of Edward IV. and that of his damnable Nature and Science; but Catesby watched him with so feline a vigilance, that he was unable to slip in more than—"Ah, Master Warner, for our blessed Lord's sake, recollect that rack and cord are more than mere words here!" To the which pleasant remark, Adam, then busy in filling his miniature boiler, only replied by a wistful stare, not in the least recognising the Nevile in his fine attire, and the new-fashioned mode of dressing his long hair.

But Catesby watched in vain for the abstraction of any treasonable contents in the engine, which the Duke of Gloucester had so shrewdly suspected. The truth must be told. Adam had entirely forgotten that in the intricacies of his mechanical lurked the papers that might overthrow a throne! Magnificent Incarnation was he (in that oblivion) of Science itself, which cares not a jot for men and nations, in their ephemeral existences; which only remembers THINGS—things that endure for ages; and in its stupendous calculations loses sight of the unit of a generation! No—he had thoroughly forgotten Henry, Edward, his own limbs and life—not only York and Lancaster, but Adam

Warner and the rack. Grand in his forgetfulness, he stood before the tiger and the tiger-cat—Edward and Richard—A Pure Thought—a Man's Soul; Science fearless in the presence of Cruelty, Tyranny, Craft, and Power.

In truth, now that Adam was thoroughly in his own sphere—was in the domain of which *he* was king, and those beings in velvet and ermine were but as ignorant savages admitted to the frontier of his realm, his form seemed to dilate into a majesty the beholders had not before recognised. And even the lazy Edward muttered, involuntarily,—"By my halidame, the man has a noble presence!"

"I am prepared now, sire," said Adam loftily, "to show to my king and to his court, that, unnoticed and obscure, in study and retreat, often live those men whom kings may be proud to call their subjects. Will it please you, my lords, this way!" and he motioned so commandingly to the room in which he had left the Eureka, that his audience rose by a common impulse, and in another minute stood grouped round the model in the adjoining chamber. This really wonderful invention—so wonderful, indeed, that it will surpass the faith of those who do not pause to consider what vast forestallments of modern science have been made and lost in the darkness of ages not fitted to receive them, —was, doubtless, in many important details, not yet adapted for the practical uses to which Adam designed its application. But as a mere model, as a marvellous essay, for the suggestion of gigantic results, it was, perhaps, to the full as effective as the ingenuity of a mechanic of our own day could construct. It is true that it was crowded with unnecessary cylinders, slides, cocks, and wheels—hideous and clumsy to the eye—

but through this intricacy the great simple design accomplished its main object. It contrived to show what force and skill man can obtain from the alliance of nature; the more clearly, inasmuch as the mechanism affixed to it, still more ingenious than itself, was well calculated to illustrate practically one of the many uses to which the principle was destined to be applied.

Adam had not yet fathomed the secret by which to supply the miniature cylinder with sufficient steam for any prolonged effect, the great truth of latent heat was unknown to him; but he had contrived to regulate the supply of water so as to make the engine discharge its duties sufficiently for the satisfaction of curiosity, and the explanation of its objects. And now this strange thing of iron was in full life. From its serpent chimney issued the thick rapid smoke, and the groan of its travail was heard within.

"And what propose you to yourself and to the kingdom, in all this, Master Adam?" asked Edward, curiously bending his tall person over the tortured iron.

"I propose to make Nature the labourer of man," answered Warner. "When I was a child of some eight years old, I observed that water swelleth into vapour when fire is applied to it. Twelve years afterwards, at the age of twenty, I observed that while undergoing this change, it exerts a mighty mechanical force. At twenty-five, constantly musing, I said, 'Why should not that force become subject to man's art?' I then began the first rude model, of which this is the descendant. I noticed that the vapour so produced is elastic—that is, that as it expands, it presses against what opposes it; it has a force applicable everywhere force is needed by man's labour. Behold a second agency of gigantic resources. And then, still

studying this, I perceived that the vapour thus produced can be reconverted into water, shrinking necessarily, while so retransformed, from the space it filled as vapour, and leaving that space a vacuum. But Nature abhors a vacuum—produce a vacuum, and the bodies that surround rush into it. Thus, the vapour again, while changing back into water, becomes also a force—our agent. And all the while these truths were shaping themselves to my mind, I was devising and improving also the material form by which I might render them useful to man; so at last, out of these truths, arose this invention!"

"Pardie," said Edward, with the haste natural to royalty, "what in common there can be between thy jargon of smoke and water and this huge ugliness of iron passeth all understanding. But spare us thy speeches, and on to thy puppet-show."

Adam stared a moment at the king in the surprise that one full of his subject feels when he sees it impossible to make another understand it, sighed, shook his head, and prepared to begin.

"Observe," he said, "that there is no juggling, no deceit. I will place in this deposit this small lump of brass—would the size of this toy would admit of larger experiment! I will then pray ye to note, as I open door after door, how the metal passes through various changes, all operated by this one agency of vapour. Heed and attend. And if the crowning work please thee, think, great king, what such an agency upon the large scale would be to thee; think how it would multiply all arts, and lessen all labour; think that thou hast, in this, achieved for a whole people the true philosopher's stone. Now, note!"

He placed the rough ore in its receptacle, and sud-

denly it seemed seized by a vice within, and vanished. He proceeded then, while dexterously attending to the complex movements, to open door after door, to show the astonished spectators the rapid transitions the metal underwent, and suddenly, in the midst of his pride, he stopped short, for, like a lightning-flash, came across his mind the remembrance of the fatal papers. Within the next door he was to open, they lay concealed. His change of countenance did not escape Richard, and he noted the door which Adam forbore to open, as the student hurriedly, and with some presence of mind, passed to the next, in which the metal was shortly to appear.

"Open *this* door," said the prince, pointing to the handle.

"No!—forbear! There is danger!—forbear!" exclaimed the mechanician.

"Danger to thine own neck, varlet and impostor!" exclaimed the duke; and he was about himself to open the door, when suddenly a loud roar—a terrific explosion was heard. Alas! Adam Warner had not yet discovered for his engine what we now call the safety valve. The steam contained in the miniature boiler had acquired an undue pressure; Adam's attention had been too much engrossed to notice the signs of the growing increase, and the rest may be easily conceived. Nothing could equal the stupor and horror of the spectators at this explosion, save only the boy-duke, who remained immovable, and still frowning. All rushed to the door, huddling one on the other, scarcely knowing what next was to befall them; but certain that the wizard was bent upon their destruction. Edward was the first to recover himself; and seeing that no lives were lost, his first impulse was that of ungovernable rage.

"Foul traitor!" he exclaimed, "was it for this that thou hast pretended to beguile us with thy damnable sorceries! Seize him! Away to the Tower-hill! and let the priest patter an ave, while the doomsman knots the rope."

Not a hand stirred; even Catesby would as lief have touched the king's lion before meals, as that poor mechanician, standing aghast, and unheeding all, beside his mutilated engine.

"Master Nevile," said the king, sternly, "dost thou hear us?"

"Verily," muttered the Nevile, approaching very slowly, "I knew what would happen; but to lay hands on my host, an' he were fifty times a wizard—No! My liege," he said in a firm tone, but falling on his knee, and his gallant countenance pale with generous terror—"My liege, forgive me. This man succoured me when struck down and wounded by a Lancastrian ruffian—this man gave me shelter, food, and healing. Command me not, O gracious my lord, to aid in taking the life of one to whom I owe my own."

"His life!" exclaimed the Duchess of Bedford—"the life of this most illustrious person! Sire, you do not dream it!"

"Heh! by the saints, what now?" cried the king, whose choler, though fierce and ruthless, was as short-lived as the passions of the indolent usually are, and whom the earnest interposition of his mother-in-law much surprised and diverted. "If, fair belle mère, thou thinkest it so illustrious a deed to frighten us out of our mortal senses, and narrowly to 'scape sending us across the river like a bevy of balls from a bombard, there is no disputing of tastes. Rise up, Master Nevile, we esteem thee not less for thy boldness; ever

be the host and the benefactor revered by English gentleman and Christian youth. Master Warner may go free."

Here Warner uttered so deep and hollow a groan, that it startled all present.

"Twenty-five years of labour, and not to have seen this!" he ejaculated. "Twenty and five years, and all wasted! How repair this disaster. O fatal day!"

"What says he?—what means he?" said Jacquetta.

"Come home!—home!" said Marmaduke, approaching the philosopher, in great alarm lest he should once more jeopardise his life. But Adam, shaking him off, began eagerly, and with tremulous hands, to examine the machine, and not perceiving any mode by which to guard in future against a danger that he saw at once would, if not removed, render his invention useless, tottered to a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"He seemeth mightily grieved that our bones are still whole!" muttered Edward. "And why, belle mère mine, wouldst thou protect this pleasant *tregetour?*"

"What!" said the duchess—"see you not that a man capable of such devices must be of doughty service against our foes?"

"Not I—how?"

"Why, if merely to signify his displeasure at our young Richard's over-curious meddling, he can cause this strange engine to shake the walls—nay, to destroy itself, think what he might do were his power and malice at our disposing. I know something of these nigromancers."

"And would you knew less! for already the Commons murmur at your favour to them. But be it as

you will. And now—ho, there!—let our steeds be caparisoned."

"You forget, sire," said Richard, who had hitherto silently watched the various parties, "the object for which we summoned this worthy man. Please you now, sir, to open that door."

"No—no!" exclaimed the king, hastily, "I will have no more provoking the foul fiend—conspirator or not, I have had enough of Master Warner. Pah! My poor placard is turned lampblack. Sweet mother-in-law, take him under thy protection; and Richard, come with me."

So saying, the king linked his arm in that of the reluctant Gloucester, and quitted the room. The duchess then ordered the rest also to depart, and was left alone with the crest-fallen philosopher.

CHAPTER VII

MY LADY DUCHESS'S OPINION OF THE UTILITY OF MASTER WARNER'S INVENTION, AND HER ESTEEM FOR ITS —EXPLOSION!

Adam, utterly unheeding, or rather deaf to, the discussion that had taken place, and his narrow escape from cord and gibbet, lifted his head peevishly from his bosom, as the duchess rested her hand almost caressingly on his shoulder, and thus addressed him:—

"Most puissant sir, think not that I am one of those, who, in their ignorance and folly, slight the mysteries of which thou art clearly so great a master. When I heard thee speak of subjecting Nature to Man, I at once comprehended thee, and blushed for the dulness of my kindred."

"Ah! lady, thou hast studied, then, the mathematics. Alack! this is a grievous blow; but it is no inherent fault in the device. I am clearly of mind that it can be remedied. But oh! what time — what thought—what sleepless nights—what gold will be needed!"

"Give me thy sleepless nights and thy grand thoughts, and thou shalt not want gold."

"Lady," cried Adam, starting to his feet, "do I hear aright? Art thou, in truth, the patron I have so long dreamed of? Hast thou the brain and the heart to aid the pursuits of science?"

"Ay! and the power to protect the students! Sage, I am the Duchess of Bedford, whom men accuse of witchcraft—as thee of wizardy. From the wife of a private gentleman, I have become the mother of a queen. I stand amidst a court full of foes; I desire gold to corrupt, and wisdom to guard against, and means to destroy, them. And I seek all these in men like thee!"

Adam turned on her his bewildered eyes, and made no answer.

"They tell me," said the duchess, "that Henry of Windsor employed learned men to transmute the baser metals into gold. Wert thou one of them?"

"No."

"Thou knowest that art?"

"I studied it in my youth, but the ingredients of the crucible were too costly."

"Thou shalt not lack them with me—thou knowest the lore of the stars, and canst foretell the designs of enemies—the hour whether to act or to forbear?"

"Astrology I have studied, but that also was in youth, for there dwelleth in the pure mathematics that have led me to this invention——"

"Truce with that invention, whatever it be—think of it no more, it has served its end in the explosion, which proved thy power of mischief—high objects are now before thee. Wilt thou be of my household, one of my alchemists and astrologers? Thou shalt have leisure, honour, and all the moneys thou canst need."

"Moneys!" said Adam, eagerly, and casting his eyes upon the mangled model—"well, I agree—what you will—alchemist, astrologist, wizard—what you will. This shall all be repaired—all—I begin to see now—ah! I begin to see—yes, if a pipe by which the too-excessive vapour could—ay, ay!—right, right," and he rubbed his hands.

Jacquetta was struck with his enthusiasm—"But surely, Master Warner, this has some virtue you have not vouchsafed to explain;—confide in me—can it change iron to gold?"

"No—but——"

"Can it predict the future?"

"No—but——"

"Can it prolong life?"

"No—but——"

"Then in God's name let us waste no more time about it!" said the duchess, impatiently—"your art is mine now. Ho, there!—I will send my page to conduct thee to thy apartments, and thou shalt lodge next to Friar Bungey, a man of wondrous lere, Master Warner, and a worthy confrere in thy researches. Hast thou any one of kith and kin at home, to whom thou wilt announce thy advancement?"

"Ah, lady! Heaven forgive me, I have a daughter—an only child—my Sibyll, I cannot leave her alone, and——"

"Well, nothing should distract thy cares from thine

art—she shall be sent for.—I will rank her amongst my maidens. Fare-thee-well, Master Warner! At night I will send for thee, and appoint the tasks I would have thee accomplish."

So saying, the duchess quitted the room, and left Adam alone, bending over his model in deep reverie.

From this absorption it was the poor man's fate to be again aroused.

The peculiar character of the boy-prince of Gloucester was that of one who, having once seized upon an object, never willingly relinquished it. First he crept and slid, and coiled round it as the snake. But if craft failed, his passion, roused by resistance, sprang at his prey with a lion's leap: and whoever examines the career of this extraordinary personage, will perceive, that whatever might be his habitual hypocrisy, he seemed to lose sight of it wholly, when once resolved upon force. Then the naked ferocity with which the destructive propensity swept away the objects in his path becomes fearfully and startlingly apparent, and offers a strange contrast to the wily duplicity with which, in calmer moments, he seems to have sought to coax the victim into his folds. Firmly convinced that Adam's engine had been made the medium of dangerous and treasonable correspondence with the royal prisoner, and, of that suspicious, restless, feverish temperament, which never slept when a fear was wakened, a doubt conceived, he had broke from his brother, whose more open valour and less unquiet intellect were ever willing to leave the crown defended but by the gibbet for the detected traitor—the sword for the declared foe; and obtaining Edward's permission "to inquire further into these strange matters," he sent at once for the porter who had conveyed the model to the Tower; but

that suspicious accomplice was gone. The sound of the explosion of the engine had no less startled the guard below than the spectators above. Releasing their hold of their prisoner, they had some taken fairly to their heels, others rushed into the palace to learn what mischief had ensued; and Hugh, with the quick discretion of his north country, had not lost so favourable an opportunity for escape. There stood the dozing mule at the door below, but the guide was vanished. More confirmed in his suspicions by this disappearance of Adam's companion, Richard, giving some preparatory orders to Catesby, turned at once to the room which still held the philosopher and his device. He closed the door on entering, and his brow was dark and sinister as he approached the musing inmate. But here we must return to Sibyll.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OLD WOMAN TALKS OF SORROWS—THE YOUNG WOMAN DREAMS OF LOVE—THE COURTIER FLIES FROM PRESENT POWER TO REMEMBRANCES OF PAST HOPES—AND THE WORLD-BETTERER OPENS UTOPIA, WITH A VIEW OF THE GIBBET FOR THE SILLY SAGE HE HAS SEDUCED INTO HIS SCHEMES—SO, EVER AND EVERMORE, RUNS THE WORLD AWAY!

The old lady looked up from her embroidery-frame, as Sibyll sat musing on a stool before her; she scanned the maiden with a wistful and somewhat melancholy eye.

"Fair girl," she said, breaking a silence that had lasted for some moments, "it seems to me that I have

seen thy face before. Wert thou never in Queen Margaret's court?"

"In childhood, yes, lady."

"Do you not remember me, the dame of Longueville?"

Sibyll started in surprise, and gazed long before she recognised the features of her hostess; for the dame of Longueville had been still, when Sibyll was a child at the court, renowned for matronly beauty, and the change was greater than the lapse of years could account for. The lady smiled sadly: "Yes, you marvel to see me thus bent and faded. Maiden, I lost my husband at the battle of St. Alban's, and my three sons in the field of Touton. My lands and my wealth have been confiscated to enrich new men; and to one of them—one of the enemies of the only king whom Alice de Longueville will acknowledge, I owe the food for my board, and the roof for my head. Do you marvel now that I am so changed?"

Sibyll rose and kissed the lady's hand, and the tear that sparkled on its surface was her only answer.

"I learn," said the dame of Longueville, "that your father has an order from the Lord Hastings to see King Henry. I trust that he will rest here as he returns, to tell me how the monarch-saint bears his afflictions. But I know: his example should console us all." She paused a moment, and resumed, "Sees your father much of the Lord Hastings?"

"He never saw him that I weet of," answered Sibyll, blushing; "the order was given, but as of usual form to a learned scholar."

"But given to whom?" persisted the lady.

"To—to me," replied Sibyll, falteringly.

The dame of Longueville smiled.

"Ah! Hastings could scarcely say no to a prayer from such rosy lips. But let me not imply aught to disparage his humane and gracious heart. To Lord Hastings, next to God and His saints, I owe all that is left to me on earth. Strange, that he is not yet here. This is the usual day and hour on which he comes, from pomp and pleasurement, to visit the lonely widow." And, pleased to find an attentive listener to her grateful loquacity, the dame then proceeded, with warm eulogies upon her protector, to inform Sibyll that her husband had, in the first outbreak of the Civil War, chanced to capture Hastings, and, moved by his valour and youth, and some old connections with his father, Sir Leonard had favoured his escape from the certain death that awaited him from the wrath of the relentess Margaret. After the field of Touton, Hastings had accepted one of the manors confiscated from the attainted House of Longueville, solely that he might restore it to the widow of the fallen lord; and, with a chivalrous consideration, not contented with beneficence, he omitted no occasion to show to the noblewoman whatever homage and respect might soothe the pride, which, in the poverty of those who have been great, becomes disease. The loyalty of the Lady Longueville was carried to a sentiment most rare in that day, and rather resembling the devotion inspired by the later Stuarts. She made her home within the precincts of the Tower, that, morning and eve, when Henry opened his lattice to greet the rising and the setting sun, she might catch a dim and distant glance of the captive king, or animate, by that sad sight, the hopes and courage of the Lancastrian emissaries, to whom, fearless of danger, she scrupled not to give counsel, and, at need, asylum.

While Sibyll, with enchanted sense, was listening to the praise of Hastings, a low knock at the door was succeeded by the entrance of that nobleman himself. Not to Elizabeth, in the alcoves of Shene, or on the dais of the palace hall, did the graceful courtier bend with more respectful reverence than to the powerless widow, whose very bread was his alms, for the true high-breeding of chivalry exists not without delicacy of feeling, formed originally by warmth of heart; and though the warmth may lose its glow, the delicacy endures, as the steel, that acquires through heat its polish, retains its lustre, even when the shine but betrays the hardness.

"And how fares my noble lady of Longueville? But need I ask? for her cheek still wears the rose of Lancaster. A companion? Ha! Mistress Warner, I learn now how much pleasure exists in surprise!"

"My young visitor," said the dame, "is but an old friend; she was one of the child-maidens reared at the court of Queen Margaret."

"In sooth!" exclaimed Hastings; and then, in an altered tone, he added, "but I should have guessed so much grace had not come all from nature. And your father has gone to see the Lord Henry, and you rest, here, his return? Ah noble lady! may you harbour always such innocent Lancastrians."

The fascinations of this eminent person's voice and manner were such, that it soon restored Sibyll to the ease she had lost at his sudden entrance. He conversed gaily with the old dame upon such matters of court anecdote as in all the changes of state were still welcome to one so long accustomed to court air; but from time to time he addressed himself to Sibyll, and provoked replies which startled herself—for she was

not yet well aware of her own gifts—by their spirit and intelligence.

"You do not tell us," said the Lady Longueville, sarcastically, "of the happy spousailles of Elizabeth's brother with the Duchess of Norfolk—a bachelor of twenty, a bride of some eighty-two.* Verily, these alliances are new things in the history of English royalty. But when Edward, who, even if not a rightful king, is at least a born Plantagenet, condescended to marry Mistress Elizabeth, a born Woodville, scarce of good gentleman's blood, nought else seems strange enough to provoke marvel."

"As to the last matter," returned Hastings, gravely, "though her grace the queen be no warm friend to me, I must needs become her champion and the king's. The lady who refused the dishonouring suit of the fairest prince and the boldest knight in the Christian world, thereby made herself worthy of the suit that honoured her; it was not Elizabeth Woodville alone that won the purple. On the day she mounted a throne, the chastity of woman herself was crowned."

"What!" said the Lady Longueville angrily, "mean you to say that there is no disgrace in the mal-alliance of kite and falcon—of Plantagenet and Woodville—of high-born and mud-descended?"

"You forget, lady, that the widow of Henry the Fifth, Catharine of Valois, a king's daughter, married the Welsh soldier, Owen Tudor—that all England teems with brave men born from similar spousailles, where love has levelled all distinctions, and made a

* The old chronicler justly calls this a "diabolical marriage." It greatly roused the wrath of the nobles, and indeed of all honourable men, as a proof of the shameless avarice of the queen's family.

purer hearth, and raised a bolder offspring, than the lukewarm likings of hearts that beat but for lands and gold. Wherefore, lady, appeal not to me, a squire of dames, a believer in the old Parliament of LOVE;—whoever is fair and chaste, gentle and loving, is, in the eyes of William De Hastings, the mate and equal of a king!"

Sibyll turned involuntarily as the courtier spoke thus, with animation in his voice, and fire in his eyes; she turned, and her breath came quick; she turned, and her look met his, and those words and that look sank deep into her heart; they called forth brilliant and ambitious dreams; they rooted the growing love, but they aided to make it holy; they gave to the delicious fancy what before it had not paused, on its wing, to sigh for; they gave it that without which all fancy, sooner or later, dies; they gave it that which, once received in a noble heart, is the excuse for untiring faith; they gave it—HOPE!

"And thou wouldst say," replied the lady of Longueville, with a meaning smile, still more emphatically—"thou wouldst say that a youth, brave and well nurtured, ambitious and loving, ought, in the eyes of rank and pride, to be the mate and equal of——"

"Ah, noble dame," interrupted Hastings, quickly; "I must not prolong encounter with so sharp a wit. Let me leave that answer to this fair maiden, for, by rights, it is a challenge to her sex, not to mine."

"How say you, then, Mistress Warner!" said the dame. "Suppose a young heiress, of the loftiest birth, of the broadest lands, of the comeliest form—suppose her wooed by a gentleman, poor and stationless, but with a mighty soul, born to achieve greatness, would she lower herself by hearkening to his suit?"

"A maiden, methinks," answered Sibyll, with reluctant but charming hesitation, "cannot love truly, if she love unworthily; and if she love worthily, it is not rank nor wealth she loves."

"But her parents, sweet mistress, may deem differently; and should not her love refuse submission to their tyranny?" asked Hastings.

"Nay, good my lord, nay," returned Sibyll, shaking her head with thoughtful demureness. "Surely the wooer, if *he* love worthily, will not press her to the curse of a child's disobedience and a parent's wrath!"

"Shrewdly answered," said the dame of Longueville.

"Then she would renounce the poor gentleman if the parent ordain her to marry a rich lord. Ah, you hesitate, for a woman's ambition is pleased with the excuse of a child's obedience."

Hastings said this so bitterly, that Sibyll could not but perceive that some personal feeling gave significance to his words. Yet how could they be applied to him,—to one now in rank and repute equal to the highest below the throne?

"If the demoiselle should so choose," said the dame of Longueville, "it seemeth to me that the rejected suitor might find it facile to disdain and to forget."

Hastings made no reply; but that remarkable and deep shade of melancholy which sometimes in his gayest hours startled those who beheld it, and which had, perhaps, induced many of the prophecies that circulated, as to the untimely and violent death that should close his bright career, gathered like a cloud over his brow. At this moment the door opened

gently, and Robert Hilyard stood at the aperture. He was clad in the dress of a friar, but the raised cowl showed his features to the lady of Longueville, to whom alone he was visible; and those bold features were literally haggard with agitation and alarm. He lifted his finger to his lips, and motioning the lady to follow him, closed the door.

The dame of Longueville rose, and praying her visitors to excuse her absence for a few moments, she left Hastings and Sibyll to themselves.

"Lady," said Hilyard, in a hollow whisper as soon as the dame appeared in the low hall, communicating on one hand with the room just left, on the other with the street,—"I fear all will be detected. Hush! Adam and the iron coffer that contains the precious papers have been conducted to Edward's presence. A terrible explosion, possibly connected with the contrivance, caused such confusion among the guards, that Hugh escaped to scare me with his news. Stationed near the gate in this disguise, I ventured to enter the court-yard, and saw — saw — the TORMENTOR!—the torturer—the hideous, masked minister of agony, led towards the chambers in which our hapless messenger is examined by the ruthless tyrants. Gloucester, the lynx-eyed mannikin, is there!"

"O Margaret, my queen!" exclaimed the lady of Longueville, "the papers will reveal her whereabout."

"No—she is safe!" returned Hilyard; "but thy poor scholar, I tremble for him, and for the heads of all whom the papers name."

"What can be done! Ha! Lord Hastings is here —he is ever humane and pitiful. Dare we confide in him?"

A bright gleam shot over Hilyard's face. "Yes—yes; let me confer with him alone. I wait him here—quick!"

The lady hastened back. Hastings was conversing in a low voice with Sibyll. The dame of Longueville whispered in the courtier's ear, drew him into the hall, and left him alone with the false friar, who had drawn the cowl over his face.

"Lord Hastings," said Hilyard, speaking rapidly, "you are in danger, if not of loss of life, of loss of favour. You gave a passport to one Warner to see the ex-king Henry. Warner's simplicity (for he is innocent) hath been duped—he is made the bearer of secret intelligence from the unhappy gentlemen who still cling to the Lancaster cause. He is suspected,—he is examined—he may be questioned by the torturer. If the treason be discovered, it was thy hand that signed the passport—the queen, thou knowest, hates thee—the Woodvilles thirst for thy downfall. What handle may this give them! Fly, my lord—fly to the Tower—thou mayst yet be in time—thy wit can screen all that may otherwise be bare. Save this poor scholar—conceal this correspondence. —Hark ye, lord! frown not so haughtily—that correspondence names thee as one who has taken the gold of Count Charolois, and whom, therefore, King Louis may outbuy. Look to thyself!"

A slight blush passed over the pale brow of the great statesman, but he answered with a steady voice, "Friar or layman, I care not which, the gold of the heir of Burgundy was a gift, not a bribe. But I need no threats to save, if not too late, from rack and gibbet, the life of a guiltless man. I am gone. Hold! bid the maiden, the scholar's daughter, follow me to the Tower."

CHAPTER IX

HOW THE DESTRUCTIVE ORGAN OF PRINCE RICHARD PROMISES GOODLY DEVELOPMENT

The Duke of Gloucester approached Adam as he stood gazing on his model. "Old man," said the prince, touching him with the point of his sheathed dagger, "look up and answer. What converse hast thou held with Henry of Windsor, and who commissioned thee to visit him in his confinement? Speak, and the truth! for by holy Paul, I am one who can detect a lie, and without that door stands—the Tormentor!"

Upon a pleasing and joyous dream broke these harsh words; for Adam then was full of the contrivance by which to repair the defect of the engine; and with this suggestion was blent confusedly the thought, that he was now protected by royalty, that he should have means and leisure to accomplish his great design, that he should have friends whose power could obtain its adoption by the king. He raised his eyes, and that young dark face frowned upon him—the child menacing the sage—brute force in a pigmy shape, having authority of life and death over the giant strength of genius. But these words, which recalled Warner from his existence as philosopher, woke that of the gentle but brave and honourable man which he was, when reduced to earth.

"Sir," he said, gravely, "if I have consented to hold converse with the unhappy, it was not as the tell-tale and the espier. I had formal warrant for my visit, and I was solicited to render it by an early friend and

comrade, who sought to be my benefactor in aiding with gold my poor studies for the king's people."

"Tut!" said Richard, impatiently, and playing with his dagger hilt; "thy words, stealthy and evasive, prove thy guilt! Sure am I that this iron traitor, with its intricate hollows and recesses, holds what, unless confessed, will give thee to the hangman! Confess all, and thou art spared."

"If," said Adam, mildly, "your highness—for though I know not your quality, I opine that no one less than royal could so menace; if your highness imagines that I have been intrusted by a fallen man, wrong me not by supposing that I could fear death more than dishonour; for certes!" (continued Adam, with innocent pedantry) "to put the case scholastically, and in the logic familiar, doubtless, to your highness, either I have something to confess, or I have not—if I have——"

"Hound!" interrupted the prince, stamping his foot, "thinkest thou to banter me—see!" As his foot shook the floor, the door opened, and a man with his arms bare, covered from head to foot in a black gown of serge, with his features concealed by a hideous mask, stood ominously at the aperture.

The prince motioned to the torturer (or tormentor, as he was technically styled) to approach, which he did noiselessly, till he stood, tall, grim, and lowering, beside Adam, like some silent and devouring monster by its prey.

"Dost thou repent thy contumacy? — A moment, and I render my questioning to another!"

"Sir," said Adam, drawing himself up, and with so sudden a change of mien, that his loftiness almost awed even the dauntless Richard—"Sir, my fathers

feared not death when they did battle for the throne of England; and why?—because in their loyal valour they placed not the interests of a mortal man, but the cause of imperishable honour! And though their son be a poor scholar, and wears not the spurs of gold —though his frame be weak and his hairs grey, he loveth honour also well eno' to look without dread on death!"

Fierce and ruthless, when irritated and opposed, as the prince was, he was still in his first youth—ambition had here no motive to harden him into stone. He was naturally so brave himself that bravery could not fail to win from him something of respect and sympathy, and he was taken wholly by surprise in hearing the language of a knight and hero from one whom he had regarded but as the artful impostor or the despicable intriguer.

He changed countenance as Warner spoke, and remained a moment silent. Then as a thought occurred to him, at which his features relaxed into a half-smile—he beckoned to the tormentor—said a word in his ear—and the horrible intruder nodded and withdrew.

"Master Warner," then said the prince, in his customary sweet and gliding tones—"it were a pity that so gallant a gentleman should be exposed to peril for adhesion to a cause that can never prosper, and that would be fatal, could it prosper, to our common country. For look you, this Margaret, who is now, we believe, in London" (here he examined Adam's countenance, which evinced surprise), "this Margaret, who is seeking to rekindle the brand and brennen of civil war, has already sold for base gold, to the enemy of the realm, to Louis XI., that very Calais

which your fathers, doubtless, lavished their blood to annex to our possessions. Shame on the lewd harlot! What woman so bloody and so dissolute? What man so feeble and craven as her lord?"

"Alas! sir," said Adam—"I am unfitted for these high considerations of state. I live but for my art, and in it. And now, behold how *my* kingdom is shaken and rent!" he pointed with so touching a smile, and so simple a sadness, to the broken engine, that Richard was moved.

"Thou lovest this, thy toy? I can comprehend that love for some dumb thing that we have toiled for. Ay!" continued the prince, thoughtfully—"ay! I have noted myself in life, that there are objects, senseless as that mould of iron, which, if we labour at them, wind round our hearts as if they were flesh and blood. So some men love learning, others glory, others power. Well, man, thou lovest that mechanical? How many years hast thou been about it?"

"From the first to the last, twenty-five years, and it is still incomplete."

"Um!" said the prince, smiling—"Master Warner, thou hast read of the judgment of Solomon—how the wise king discovered the truth by ordering the child's death."

"It was indeed," said Adam, unsuspectingly—"a most shrewd suggestion of native wit and clerkly wisdom."

"Glad am I thou approvest it, Master Warner," said Richard. And as he spoke the tormentor reappeared with a smith, armed with the implements of his trade.

"Good smith, break into pieces this stubborn iron; bare all its receptacles; leave not one fragment stand-

ing on the other! *Delenda est tua Carthago,* Master Warner. There is Latin in answer to thy logic."

It is impossible to convey any notion of the terror, the rage, the despair, which seized upon the unhappy sage when these words smote his ear, and he saw the smith's brawny arms swing on high the ponderous hammer. He flung himself between the murderous stroke and his beloved model. He embraced the grim iron tightly. "Kill *me!*" he exclaimed, sublimely, "kill *me!*—not my THOUGHT!"

"Solomon was verily and indeed a wise king," said the duke, with a low inward laugh. "And now, man, I have thee! To save thy infant—thine art's hideous infant—confess the whole!"

It was then that a fierce struggle evidently took place in Adam's bosom. It was, perhaps—O reader! thou whom pleasure, love, ambition, hatred, avarice, in thine and our ordinary existence, tempt—it was, perhaps, to him the one arch-temptation of a life. In the changing countenance, the heaving breast, the trembling lip, the eyes that closed and opened to close again, as if to shut out the unworthy weakness —yea, in the whole physical man—was seen the crisis of the moral struggle. And what, in truth, to him, an Edward or a Henry, a Lancaster or a York? Nothing. But still that instinct, that principle, that conscience, ever strongest in those whose eyes are accustomed to the search of truth, prevailed. So he rose suddenly and quietly, drew himself apart, left his work to the Destroyer, and said—

"Prince, thou art a boy! Let a boy's voice annihilate that which should have served all time. Strike!"

Richard motioned—the hammer descended—the engine and its appurtenances reeled, and crashed—

the doors flew open—the wheels rattled—the sparks flew. And Adam Warner fell to the ground, as if the blow had broken his own heart. Little heeding the insensible victim of his hard and cunning policy, Richard advanced to the inspection of the interior recesses of the machinery. But that which promised Adam's destruction, saved him. The heavy stroke had battered in the receptacle of the documents—had buried them in the layers of iron. The faithful Eureka, even amidst its injuries and wrecks, preserved the secret of its master.

The prince, with impatient hands, explored all the apertures yet revealed, and after wasting many minutes in a fruitless search, was about to bid the smith complete the work of destruction, when the door suddenly opened and Lord Hastings entered. His quick eye took in the whole scene—he arrested the lifted arm of the smith, and passing deliberately to Gloucester, said with a profound reverence, but a half-reproachful smile, "My lord! my lord! your highness is indeed severe upon my poor scholar."

"Canst thou answer for thy scholar's loyalty?" said the Duke, gloomily.

Hastings drew the prince aside, and said, in a low tone, "His loyalty! poor man, I know not; but his guilelessness, surely, yes. Look you, sweet prince, I know the interest thou hast in keeping well with the Earl of Warwick, whom I, in sooth, have slight cause to love. Thou hast trusted me with thy young hopes of the Lady Anne; this new Nevile placed about the king, and whose fortunes Warwick hath made his care, hath, I have reason to think, some love passages with the scholar's daughter—the daughter came to me for the passport. Shall this Marmaduke Nevile

have it to say to his fair kinswoman, with the unforgiving malice of a lover's memory, that the princely Gloucester stooped to be the torturer of yon poor old man? If there be treason in the scholar, or in yon battered craft-work, leave the search to me."

The duke raised his dark, penetrating eyes to those of Hastings, which did not quail. For here world-genius encountered world-genius, and art, art.

"Thine argument hath more subtlety and circumlocūtion than suit with simple truth," said the prince, smiling. "But it is enough to Richard that Hastings wills protection even to a spy!"

Hastings kissed the duke's hand in silence, and going to the door, he disappeared a moment and returned with Sibyll. As she entered, pale and trembling, Adam rose, and the girl with a wild cry flew to his bosom.

"It is a winsome face, Hastings," said the duke, drily. "I pity Master Nevile the lover, and envy my Lord Chamberlain the protector."

Hastings laughed, for he was well pleased that Richard's suspicion took that turn.

"And now," he said, "I suppose Master Nevile and the Duchess of Bedford's page may enter. Your guard stopped them hitherto. They come for this gentleman from her highness the queen's mother."

"Enter, Master Nevile, and you, Sir Page. What is your errand?"

"My lady, the duchess," said the page, "has sent me to conduct Master Warner to the apartments prepared for him as her special multiplier and alchemist."

"What!" said the prince, who, unlike the irritable Clarence, made it his policy to show all decorous homage to the queen's kin; "hath that illustrious lady

taken this gentleman into her service? Why announced you not, Master Warner, what at once had saved you from further questioning? Lord Hastings, I thank you *now* for your intercession."

Hastings, in answer, pointed archly at Marmaduke, who was aiding Sibyll to support her father. "Do you suspect me still, prince?" he whispered.

The duke shrugged his shoulders, and Adam, breaking from Marmaduke and Sibyll, passed with tottering steps to the shattered labour of his solitary life. He looked at the ruin with mournful despondence, with quivering lips. "Have you done with me?" then he said, bowing his head lowlily, for his pride was gone—"may we—that is, I and this, my poor device, withdraw from your palace? I see we are not fit for kings!"

"Say not so," said the young duke, gently: "we have now convinced ourselves of our error, and I crave thy pardon, Master Warner, for my harsh dealings. As for this, thy toy, the king's workmen shall set it right for thee. Smith, call the fellows yonder, to help bear this to——" He paused, and glanced at Hastings.

"To my apartments," said the Chamberlain. "Your highness may be sure that I will there inspect it. Fear not, Master Warner; no further harm shall chance to thy contrivance."

"Come, sir, forgive me," said the duke. With gracious affability the young prince held out his hand, the fingers of which sparkled with costly gems, to the old man. The old man bowed as if his beard would have swept the earth, but he did not touch the hand. He seemed still in a state between dream and reason, life and death: he moved not, spoke not, till the men

came to bear the model; and he then followed it, his arms folded in his gown, till, on entering the court, it was borne in a contrary direction from his own, to the Chamberlain's apartment; then wistfully pursuing it with his eyes, he uttered such a sigh as might have come from a resigned father losing the last glimpse of a beloved son.

Richard hesitated a moment, loth to relinquish his research, and doubtful whether to follow the Eureka for renewed investigation; but partly unwilling to compromise his dignity in the eyes of Hastings, should his suspicions prove unfounded, and partly indisposed to risk the displeasure of the vindictive Duchess of Bedford by further molestation of one now under her protection, he reluctantly trusted all further inquiry to the well-known loyalty of Hastings.

"If Margaret be in London," he muttered to himself as he turned slowly away, "now is the time to seize and chain the lioness! Ho, Catesby,—hither (a valuable man that Catesby—a lawyer's nurturing with a bloodhound's nature!)—Catesby, while King Edward rides for pleasure, let thou and I track the scent of his foes. If the she-wolf of Anjou hath ventured hither, she hides in some convent or monastery, be sure. See to our palfreys, Catesby! Strange" (added the prince, muttering to himself), "that I am more restless to guard the crown than he who wears it! Nay, a crown is a goodly heirloom in a man's family, and a fair sight to see near—and near—and near——"

The prince abruptly paused, opened and shut his right hand convulsively, and drew a long sigh.

BOOK IV

INTRIGUES OF THE COURT OF EDWARD IV

CHAPTER I

MARGARET OF ANJOU

The day after the events recorded in the last section of this narrative, and about the hour of noon, Robert Hilyard (still in the reverend disguise in which he had accosted Hastings) bent his way through the labyrinth of alleys that wound in dingy confusion from the Chepe towards the river.

The purlieus of the Thames, in that day of ineffective police, sheltered many who either lived upon plunder, or sought abodes that proffered, at alarm, the facility of flight. Here, sauntering in twos or threes, or lazily reclined by the thresholds of plaster huts, might be seen that refuse population which is the unholy offspring of civil war—disbanded soldiers of either Rose, too inured to violence and strife for peaceful employment, and ready for any enterprise by which keen steel wins bright gold. At length, our friend stopped before the gate of a small house, on the very marge of the river, which belonged to one of the many religious orders then existing; but from its site and aspect, denoted the poverty seldom their characteristic. Here he knocked; the door was opened by a lay-brother; a sign and a smile were interchanged, and the

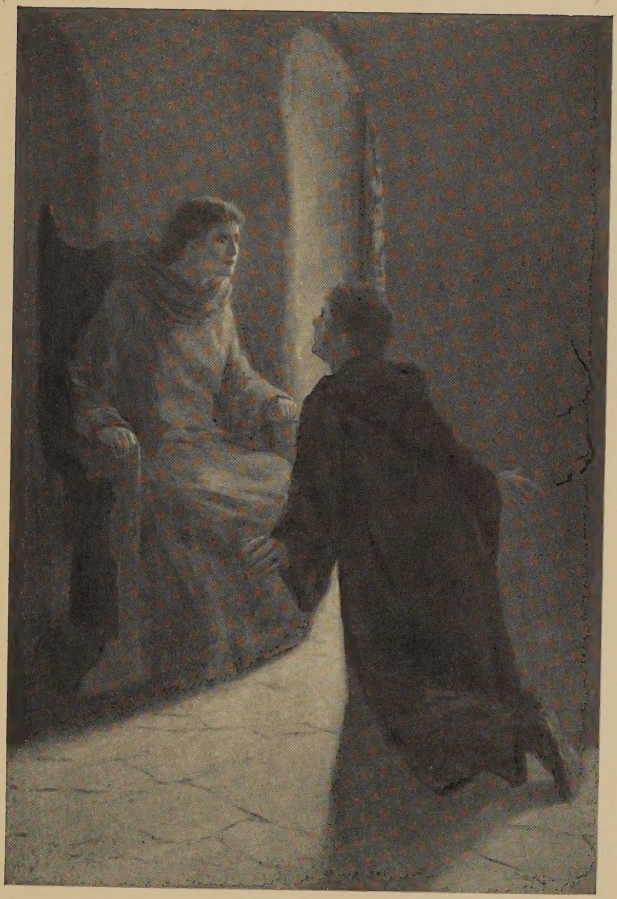
visitor was ushered into a room belonging to the superior, but given up for the last few days to a foreign priest, to whom the whole community appeared to consider the reverence of a saint was due. And yet this priest, who, seated alone, by a casement which commanded a partial view of the distant Tower of London, received the conspirator, was clad in the humblest serge. His face was smooth and delicate; and the animation of the aspect, the vehement impatience of the gesture, evinced little of the holy calm that should belong to those who have relinquished the affairs of earth for meditation on the things of heaven. To this personage, the sturdy Hilyard bowed his manly knees; and casting himself at the priest's feet, his eyes, his countenance, changed from their customary hardihood and recklessness, into an expression at once of reverence and of pity.

"Well, man—well, friend—good friend, tried and leal friend—speak! speak!" exclaimed the priest, in an accent that plainly revealed a foreign birth!

"Oh! gracious lady! all hope is over: I come but to bid you fly. Adam Warner was brought before the usurper; he escaped, indeed, the torture, and was faithful to the trust. But the papers—the secret of the rising,—are in the hands of Hastings."

"How long, O Lord," said Margaret of Anjou, for she it was, under that reverend disguise, "how long wilt thou delay the hour of triumph and revenge?"

The princess, as she spoke, had suffered her hood to fall back, and her pale, commanding countenance, so well fitted to express fiery and terrible emotion, wore that aspect in which many a sentenced man had read his doom; an aspect the more fearful, inasmuch as the passion that pervaded it did not distort the feat-



"I come but to bid you fly."

ures, but left them locked, rigid, and marble-like in beauty, as the head of the Medusa.

"The day will dawn at last," said Hilyard, "but the judgments of Heaven are slow. We are favoured, at the least, that our secret is confined to a man more merciful than his tribe." He then related to Margaret his interview with Hastings, at the house of the Lady Longueville, and continued:—"This morning, not an hour since, I sought him (for last evening he did not leave Edward—a council met at the Tower), and learned that he had detected the documents in the recesses of Warner's engine. Knowing from your highness and your spies, that he had been open to the gifts of Charolois, I spoke to him plainly of the guerdon that should await his silence. 'Friar,' he answered, 'if in this court and this world I have found it were a fool's virtue to be more pure than others, and if I know that I should but provoke the wrath of those who profit by Burgundian gold, were I alone to disdain its glitter; I have still eno' of my younger conscience left me not to make barter of human flesh. Did I give these papers to King Edward, the heads of fifty gallant men, whose error is but loyalty to their ancient sovereign, would glut the doomsman. But,' he continued, 'I am yet true to my king and his cause; I shall know how to advise Edward to the frustrating all your schemes. The districts where you hoped a rising will be guarded, the men ye count upon will be watched: the Duke of Gloucester, whose vigilance never sleeps, has learned that the Lady Margaret is in England, disguised as a priest. To-morrow, all the religious houses will be searched; if thou knowest where she lies concealed, bid her lose not an hour to fly.'"

"I will NOT fly!" exclaimed Margaret; "let Ed-

ward, if he dare, proclaim to my people that their queen is in her city of London. Let him send his hirelings to seize her. Not in this dress shall she be found. In robes of state, the sceptre in her hand, shall they drag the consort of their king to the prison-house of her palace."

"On my knees, great queen, I implore you to be calm; with the loss of your liberty ends indeed all hope of victory, all chance even of struggle. Think not Edward's fears would leave to Margaret the life that his disdain has spared to your royal spouse. Between your prison and your grave, but one secret and bloody step! Be ruled; no time to lose! My trusty Hugh, even now, waits with his boat below. Relays of horses are ready, night and day, to bear you to the coast; while seeking your restoration, I have never neglected the facilities for flight. Pause not, O gracious lady; let not your son say—'My mother's passion has lost me the hope of my grandsire's crown.'"

"My boy, my princely boy, my Edward!" exclaimed Margaret, bursting into tears, all the warrior-queen merged in the remembrance of the fond mother. "Ah! faithful friend! he is so gallant and so beautiful! Oh, he shall reward thee well hereafter!"

"May he live to crush these barons, and raise this people!" said the demagogue of Redesdale. "But now, save thyself."

"But what!—is it not possible yet to strike the blow! rather let us spur to the north—rather let us hasten the hour of action, and raise the Red Rose through the length and breadth of England!"

"Ah, lady, if without warrant from your lord—if without foreign subsidies—if without having yet ripened the time—if without gold, without arms, and

without one great baron on our side, we forestall a rising, all that we have gained is lost; and instead of war, you can scarcely provoke a riot. But for this accursed alliance of Edward's daughter with the brother of the icy-hearted Louis, our triumph had been secure. The French king's gold would have manned a camp, bribed the discontented lords, and his support have sustained the hopes of the more leal Lancastrians. But it is in vain to deny, that if Lord Warwick win Louis——"

"He will not!—he shall not!—Louis, mine own kinsman!" exclaimed Margaret, in a voice in which the anguish pierced through the louder tone of resentment and disdain.

"Let us hope that he will not," replied Hilyard, soothingly; "some chance may yet break off these nuptials, and once more give us France as our firm ally. But now we must be patient. Already Edward is fast wearing away the gloss of his crown—already the great lords desert his court—already, in the rural provinces, peasant and franklin complain of the exactions of his minions—already the mighty house of Nevile frowns sullen on the throne it built. Another year, and who knows but the Earl of Warwick—the beloved and the fearless—whose statesman-art alone hath severed from you the arms and aid of France—at whose lifted finger all England would bristle with armed men — may ride by the side of Margaret through the gates of London?"

"Evil-omened consoler, never!" exclaimed the princess, starting to her feet, with eyes that literally shot fire. "Thinkest thou that the spirit of a queen lies in me so low and crushed, that I, the descendant of Charlemagne, could forgive the wrongs endured

from Warwick and his father. But thou, though wise and loyal, art of the Commons: thou knowest not how they feel through whose veins rolls the blood of kings!"

A dark and cold shade fell over the bold face of Robin of Redesdale at these words.

"Ah, lady," he said, with bitterness, "if no misfortune can curb thy pride, in vain would we rebuild thy throne. It is these Commons, Margaret of Anjou—these English Commons—this Saxon People, that can alone secure to thee the holding of the realm which the right arm wins. And, beshrew me, much as I love thy cause—much as thou hast with thy sorrows and thy princely beauty, glamoured and spelled my heart and my hand—ay, so that I, the son of a Lollard, forget the wrongs the Lollards sustained from the House of Lancaster—so that I, who have seen the glorious fruitage of a Republic, yet labour for thee, to overshadow the land with the throne of ONE—yet—yet, lady—yet, if I thought thou wert to be the same Margaret as of old, looking back to thy dead kings, and contemptuous of thy living people, I would not bid one mother's son lift lance or bill on thy behalf."

So resolutely did Robin of Redesdale utter these words, that the queen's haughty eye fell abashed as he spoke; and her craft, or her intellect, which was keen and prompt where her passions did not deafen and blind her judgment, instantly returned to her. Few women equalled this once idol of knight and minstrel, in the subduing fascination that she could exert in her happier moments. Her affability was as gracious as her wrath was savage; and with a dignified and winning frankness, she extended her hand to her ally, as she answered, in a sweet, humble, womanly, and almost penitent voice—

"O, bravest and lealest of friends, forgive thy wretched queen. Her troubles distract her brain, chide her not if they sour her speech. Saints above! will ye not pardon Margaret, if at times her nature be turned from the mother's milk into streams of gall and bloody purpose—when ye see, from your homes serene, in what a world of strife and falsehood her very womanhood hath grown unsexed!" She paused a moment, and her uplifted eyes shed tears fast and large. Then, with a sigh, she turned to Hilyard, and resumed more calmly—"Yes, thou art right—adversity hath taught me much. And though adversity will too often but feed and not starve our pride, yet thou—thou hast made me know that there is more of true nobility in the blunt Children of the People, than in many a breast over which flows the kingly robe. Forgive me, and the daughter of Charlemagne shall yet be a mother to the Commons, who claim thee as their brother!"

Thoroughly melted, Robin of Redesdale bowed over the hand held to his lips, and his rough voice trembled as he answered—though that answer took but the shape of prayer.

"And now," said the princess, smiling, "to make peace lasting between us;—I conquer myself—I yield to thy counsels. Once more the fugitive, I abandon the city that contains Henry's unheeded prison. See, I am ready. Who will know Margaret in this attire? Lead on!"

Rejoiced to seize advantage of this altered and submissive mood, Robin instantly took the way through a narrow passage, to a small door communicating with the river. There Hugh was waiting in a small boat, moored to the damp and discoloured stairs.

Robin, by a gesture, checked the man's impulse to throw himself at the feet of the pretended priest, and bade him put forth his best speed. The princess seated herself by the helm and the little boat cut rapidly through the noble stream. Galleys, gay and gilded, with armorial streamers, and filled with nobles and gallants, passed them, noisy with mirth or music, on their way. These the fallen sovereign heeded not; but, with all her faults, the woman's heart beating in her bosom —she who, in prosperity, had so often wrought ruin, and shame, and woe to her gentle lord; she who had been reckless of her trust as queen, and incurred grave —but, let us charitably hope, unjust—suspicion, of her faith as wife, still fixed her eyes on the gloomy tower that contained her captive husband, and felt that she could have forgotten awhile even the loss of power if but permitted to fall on that plighted heart, and weep over the past with the woe-worn bridegroom of her youth.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH ARE LAID OPEN TO THE READER THE CHARACTER OF EDWARD THE FOURTH AND THAT OF HIS COURT, WITH THE MACHINATIONS OF THE WOODVILLES AGAINST THE EARL OF WARWICK

Scarcely need it be said to those who have looked with some philosophy upon human life, that the young existence of Master Marmaduke Nevile, once fairly merged in the great common sea, will rarely reappear before us individualised and distinct. The type of the provincial cadet of the day, hastening courtwards to seek his fortune, he becomes lost amidst the gigantic

characters and fervid passions that alone stand forth in history. And as, in reading biography, we first take interest in the individual who narrates, but if his career shall pass into that broader and more stirring life, in which he mingles with men who have left a more dazzling memory than his own, we find the interest change from the narrator to those by whom he is surrounded and eclipsed,—so, in this record of a time, we scarce follow our young adventurer into the court of the brilliant Edward, ere the scene itself allures and separates us from our guide; his mission is, as it were, well nigh done. We leave, then, for a while, this bold, frank nature—fresh from the health of the rural life—gradually to improve, or deprave itself, in the companionship it finds. The example of the Lords Hastings, Scales, and Worcester, and the accomplishments of the two younger Princes of York, especially the Duke of Gloucester, had diffused among the younger and gayer part of the court that growing taste for letters which had somewhat slept during the dynasty of the House of Lancaster; and Marmaduke's mind became aware that learning was no longer the peculiar distinction of the church, and that Warwick was behind his age when he boasted "that the sword was more familiar to him than the pen." He had the sagacity to perceive that the alliance with the great earl did not conduce to his popularity at court; and, even in the king's presence, the courtiers permitted themselves many taunts and jests of the fiery Warwick, which they would have bitten out their tongues ere they would have vented before the earl himself. But, though the Nevile sufficiently controlled his native candour not to incur unprofitable quarrel by ill-mannered and unseasonable defence of the hero-baron, when sneered at or

assailed, he had enough of the soldier and the man in him not to be tainted by the envy of the time and place—not to lose his gratitude to his patron, nor his respect for the bulwark of the country. Rather, it may be said, that Warwick gained in his estimation whenever compared with the gay and silken personages who avenged themselves by words for his superiority in deeds. Not only as a soldier, but as a statesman, the great and peculiar merits of the earl were visible in all those measures which emanated solely from himself. Though so indifferently educated, his busy, practical career, his affable mixing with all classes, and his hearty, national sympathies, made him so well acquainted with the interests of his country and the habits of his countrymen, that he was far more fitted to rule than the scientific Worcester or the learned Scales. The young Duke of Gloucester presented a marked contrast to the general levity of the court, in speaking of this powerful nobleman. He never named him but with respect, and was pointedly courteous to even the humblest member of the earl's family. In this he appeared to advantage by the side of Clarence, whose weakness of disposition made him take the tone of the society in which he was thrown, and who, while really loving Warwick, often smiled at the jests against him—not, indeed, if uttered by the queen or her family, of whom he ill concealed his jealousy and hatred.

The whole court was animated and pregnant with a spirit of intrigue, which the artful cunning of the queen, the astute policy of Jacquetta, and the animosity of the different factions had fomented, to a degree quite unknown under former reigns. It was a place in which the wit of young men grew old rapidly: amidst stratagem, and plot, and ambitious design, and

stealthy overreaching, the boyhood of Richard III. passed to its relentless manhood: such is the inevitable fruit of that era in civilization when a martial aristocracy first begins to merge into a voluptuous court.

Through this moving and shifting web of ambition and intrigue the royal Edward moved with a careless grace: simple himself, because his object was won, and pleasure had supplanted ambition. His indolent, joyous temper, served to deaden his powerful intellect; or, rather, his intellect was now lost in the sensual stream through which it flowed. Ever in pursuit of some new face, his schemes and counter-schemes were limited to cheat a husband or deceive a wife; and dexterous and successful, no doubt, they were. But a vice always more destructive than the love of women began also to reign over him,—viz., the intemperance of the table. The fastidious and graceful epicurism of the early Normans, inclined to dainties but abhorring excess, and regarding with astonished disdain the heavy meals and deep draughts of the Saxon, had long ceased to characterise the offspring of that noblest of all noble races. Warwick, whose stately manliness was disgusted with whatever savoured of effeminacy or debauch, used to declare that he would rather fight fifty battles for Edward IV. than once sup with him! Feasts were prolonged for hours, and the banquets of this king of the Middle Ages almost resembled those of the later Roman emperors. The Lord Montagu did not share the abstemiousness of his brother of Warwick. He was, next to Hastings, the king's chosen and most favourite companion. He ate almost as much as the king, and drank very little less. Of few courtiers could the same be said! Over the lavish profligacy and excess of the court, however, a veil,

dazzling to the young and high-spirited, was thrown. Edward was thoroughly the cavalier, deeply imbued with the romance of chivalry, and, while making the absolute woman his plaything, always treated the ideal woman as a goddess. A refined gallantry—a deferential courtesy to dame and demoiselle—united the language of an Amadis with the licentiousness of a Gaolor; and a far more alluring contrast than the court of Charles II. presented to the grim Commonwealth, seduced the vulgar in that of this most brave and most beautiful prince, when compared with the mournful and lugubrious circles in which Henry VI. had reigned and prayed. Edward himself, too, it was so impossible to judge with severe justice, that his extraordinary popularity in London, where he was daily seen, was never diminished by his faults; he was so bold in the field, yet so mild in the chamber; when his passions slept, he was so thoroughly good-natured and social—so kind to all about his person—so hearty and gladsome in his talk and in his vices—so magnificent and so generous withal; and, despite his indolence, his capacities for business were marvellous—and these last commanded the reverence of the good Londoners; he often administered justice himself, like the caliphs of the East, and with great acuteness and address. Like most extravagant men, he had a wholesome touch of avarice. That contempt for commerce which characterises a modern aristocracy was little felt by the nobles of that day, with the exception of such blunt patricians as Lord Warwick or Raoul de Fulke. The great house of De la Pole (Duke of Suffolk), the heir of which married Edward's sister, Elizabeth, had been founded by a merchant of Hull. Earls and archbishops scrupled not to derive revenues from what we

should now esteem the literal resources of trade.* No house had ever shown itself on this point more liberal in its policy, more free from feudal prejudices, than that of the Plantagenets. Even Edward II. was tenacious of the commerce with Genoa, and an intercourse with the merchant princes of that republic probably served to associate the pursuits of commerce with the notion of rank and power. Edward III. is still called

* The Abbot of St. Albans (temp. Henry III.) was a vendor of Yarmouth bloaters. The Cistercian Monks were wool-merchants; and Macpherson tells us of a couple of Iceland bishops who got a licence from Henry VI. for smuggling. (Matthew Paris. Macpherson's "Annals of Commerce," 10.) As the Whig historians generally have thought fit to consider the Lancastrian cause the more "*liberal*" of the two, because Henry IV. was the popular choice, and, in fact, an elected, not an hereditary king, so it cannot be too emphatically repeated, that the accession of Edward IV. was the success of two new and two highly popular principles—the one, that of church reform, the other, that of commercial calculation. All that immense section, almost a majority of the people, who had been persecuted by the Lancastrian kings as Lollards, revenged on Henry the aggrieved rights of religious toleration. On the other hand, though Henry IV., who was immeasurably superior to his warlike son in intellect and statesmanship, had favoured the growing commercial spirit, it had received nothing but injury under Henry V., and little better than contempt under Henry VI. The accession of the Yorkists was, then, on two grounds, a great popular movement; and it was followed by a third advantage to the popular cause—viz., in the determined desire both of Edward and Richard III. to destroy the dangerous influence of the old feudal aristocracy. To this end Edward laboured in the creation of a court noblesse: and Richard, with the more dogged resolution that belonged to him, went at once to the root of the feudal power, in forbidding the nobles to give badges and liveries;[a] in other words, to appropriate armies under the name of retainers. Henry VII., in short, did not originate the policy for which he has monopolised the credit; he did but steadily follow out the theory of raising the middle class and humbling the baronial, which the House of York first put into practice.

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a This also was forbidden, it is true, by the edict of Edward IV. as well as by his predecessors from the reign of Richard II., but no king seems to have had the courage to enforce the prohibition before Richard III.

the Father of English Commerce; but Edward IV. carried the theories of his ancestors into far more extensive practice, for his own personal profit. This king, so indolent in the palace, was literally the most active merchant in the mart. He traded largely in ships of his own, freighted with his own goods; and though, according to sound modern œconomics, this was anything but an aid to commerce, seeing that no private merchant could compete with a royal trader, who went out and came in duty-free, yet certainly the mere companionship and association in risk and gain, and the common conversation that it made between the affable monarch and the homeliest trader, served to increase his popularity, and to couple it with respect for practical sense. Edward IV. was in all this pre-eminently THE MAN OF HIS AGE—not an inch behind it or before! And, in addition to this happy position, he was one of those darlings of Nature, so affluent and blest in gifts of person, mind, and outward show, that it is only at the distance of posterity we ask why men of his own age admired the false, the licentious, and the cruel, where those contemporaries, over-dazzled, saw but the heroic and the joyous, the young, the beautiful,—the affable to friend, and the terrible to foe!

It was necessary to say thus much on the commercial tendencies of Edward, because, at this epoch, they operated greatly, besides other motives shortly to be made clear, in favour of the plot laid by the enemies of the Earl of Warwick, to dishonour that powerful minister, and drive him from the councils of the king.

One morning Hastings received a summons to attend Edward, and on entering the royal chamber, he found already assembled, Lord Rivers, the queen's

father, Anthony Woodville, and the Earl of Worcester.

The king seemed thoughtful; he beckoned Hastings to approach, and placed in his hand a letter, dated from Rouen. "Read and judge, Hastings," said Edward.

The letter was from a gentleman in Warwick's train. It gave a glowing account of the honours accorded to the earl by Louis XI., greater than those ever before manifested to a subject, and proceeded thus:—"But it is just I should apprise you that there be strange rumours as to the marvellous love that King Louis shows my lord the earl. He lodgeth in the next house to him, and hath even had an opening made in the partition-wall between his own chamber and the earl's. Men do say that the king visits him nightly, and there be those who think that so much stealthy intercourse between an English ambassador and the kinsman of Margaret of Anjou bodeth small profit to our grace the king."

"I observe," said Hastings, glancing to the superscription, "that this letter is addressed to my Lord Rivers. Can he avouch the fidelity of his correspondent?"

"Surely, yes," answered Rivers; "it is a gentleman of my own blood."

"Were he not so accredited," returned Hastings, "I should question the truth of a man who can thus consent to play the spy upon his lord and superior."

"The public weal justifies all things," said the Earl of Worcester (who, though by marriage nearly connected to Warwick, eyed his power with the jealous scorn which the man of book-lore often feels for one whose talent lies in action)—"so held our masters in all state-craft, the Greek and Roman."

"Certes," said Sir Anthony Woodville, "it grieveth the pride of an English knight, that we should be beholden for courtesies to the born foe of England, which I take the Frenchman naturally to be."

"Ah," said Edward, smiling sternly, "I would rather be myself, with banner and trump, before the walls of Paris, than sending my cousin, the earl, to beg the French king's brother to accept my sister as a bride. And what is to become of my good merchantships if Burgundy take umbrage and close its ports?"

"Beau sire," said Hastings, "thou knowest how little cause I have to love the Earl of Warwick. We all here, save your gracious self, bear the memory of some affront rendered to us by his pride and heat of mood! but in this council I must cease to be William de Hastings, and be all and wholly the king's servant. I say first, then, with reference to these noble peers, that Warwick's faith to the House of York is too well proven to become suspected because of the courtesies of King Louis—an artful craft, as it clearly seems to me, of the wily Frenchman, to weaken your throne, by provoking your distrust of its great supporter. Fall we not into such a snare! Moreover, we may be sure that Warwick cannot be false, if he achieve the object of his embassy—viz., detach Louis from the side of Margaret and Lancaster, by close alliance with Edward and York. Secondly, sire, with regard to that alliance which it seems you would repent—I hold now, as I have held ever, that it is a master-stroke in policy, and the earl in this proves his sharp brain worthy his strong arm; for as his highness the Duke of Gloucester hath now clearly discovered that Margaret of Anjou has been of late in London, and that treasonable designs were meditated, though now frustrated, so we

may ask why the friends of Lancaster really stood aloof? why all conspiracy was, and is in vain?—Because, sire, of this very alliance with France; because the gold and subsidies of Louis are not forthcoming; because the Lancastrians see that if once Lord Warwick win France from the Red Rose, nothing short of such a miracle as their gaining Warwick instead can give a hope to their treason. Your highness fears the anger of Burgundy, and the suspension of your trade with the Flemings; but forgive me—this is not reasonable. Burgundy dare not offend England, matched, as its arms are, with France; the Flemings gain more by you than you gain by the Flemings, and those interested burghers will not suffer any prince's quarrel to damage their commerce. Charolois may bluster and threat, but the storm will pass, and Burgundy will be contented, if England remain neutral in the feud with France. All these reasons, sire, urge me to support my private foe, the Lord Warwick, and to pray you to give no ear to the discrediting his honour and his embassy."

The profound sagacity of these remarks, the repute of the speaker, and the well-known grudge between him and Warwick, for reasons hereafter to be explained, produced a strong effect upon the intellect of Edward, always vigorous, save when clouded with passion. But Rivers, whose malice to the earl was indomitable, coldly recommenced.

"With submission to the Lord Hastings, sire, whom we know that love sometimes blinds, and whose allegiance to the earl's fair sister, the Lady of Bonville, perchance somewhat moves him to forget the day when Lord Warwick——"

"Cease, my lord," said Hastings, white with sup-

pressed anger; "these references beseem not the councils of grave men."

"Tut, Hastings," said Edward, laughing merrily—"women mix themselves up in all things: board or council, bed or battle—wherever there is mischief astir, there, be sure, peeps a woman's sly face from her wimple. Go on, Rivers."

"Your pardon, my Lord Hastings," said Rivers—"I knew not my thrust went so home; there is another letter I have not yet laid before the king." He drew forth a scroll from his bosom, and read as follows:—

"Yesterday the earl feasted the king, and as, in discharge of mine office, I carved for my lord, I heard King Louis say—'Pasque Dieu, my Lord Warwick; our couriers bring us word that Count Charolois declares he shall yet wed the Lady Margaret, and that he laughs at your ambassage. What if our brother, King Edward, fall back from the treaty?' 'He durst not!' said the earl."

"Durst not!" exclaimed Edward, starting to his feet, and striking the table with his clenched hand, "Durst not! Hastings, hear you that?"

Hastings bowed his head, in assent. "Is that all, Lord Rivers?"

"All! and methinks enough."

"Enough, by my halidame!" said Edward, laughing bitterly; "he shall see what a king dares, when a subject threatens. Admit the worshipful the deputies from our city of London—lord chamberlain, it is thine office—they await in the ante-room."

Hastings gravely obeyed, and in crimson gowns, with purple hoods and gold chains, marshalled into the king's presence a goodly deputation from the various corporate companies of London.

These personages advanced within a few paces of the dais, and there halted and knelt, while their spokesman read, on his knees, a long petition, praying the king to take into his gracious consideration the state of the trade with the Flemings; and though not absolutely venturing to name or to deprecate the meditated alliance with France, beseeching his grace to satisfy them as to certain rumours, already very prejudicial to their commerce, of the possibility of a breach with the Duke of Burgundy. The merchant-king listened with great attention and affability to this petition; and replied, shortly, that he thanked the deputation for their zeal for the public weal—that a king would have enough to do if he contravened every gossip's tale; but that it was his firm purpose to protect, in all ways, the London traders, and to maintain the most amicable understanding with the Duke of Burgundy.

The supplicators then withdrew from the royal presence.

"Note you how gracious the king was to me?" whispered Master Heyford to one of his brethren; "he looked at me while he answered."

"Coxcomb!" muttered the confidant, "as if I did not catch his eye when he said, 'Ye are the pillars of the public weal.' But because Master Heyford has a handsome wife, he thinks he tosseth all London on his own horns!"

As the citizens were quitting the palace, Lord Rivers joined them. "You will thank me for suggesting this deputation, worthy sirs," said he, smiling significantly; "you have timed it well!"—and passing by them, without further comment, he took the way to the queen's chamber.

Elizabeth was playing with her infant daughter, tossing the child in the air, and laughing at its riotous laughter. The stern old Duchess of Bedford, leaning over the back of the state-chair, looked on with all a grandmother's pride, and half chanted a nursery rhyme. It was a sight fair to see! Elizabeth never seemed more lovely: her artificial, dissimulating smile, changed into hearty, maternal glee; her smooth cheek flushed with exercise, a stray ringlet escaping from the stiff coif!—And, alas, the moment the two ladies caught sight of Rivers, all the charm was dissolved—the child was hastily put on the floor—the queen, half ashamed of being natural, even before her father, smoothed back the rebel lock, and the duchess, breaking off in the midst of her grandam song, exclaimed,—

"Well, well!—how thrives our policy?"

"The king," answered Rivers, "is in the very mood we could desire. At the words, 'He durst not!' the Plantagenet sprung up in his breast; and now, lest he ask to see the rest of the letter, thus I destroy it;"—and flinging the scroll in the blazing hearth, he watched it consume.

"Why this, sir?" said the queen.

"Because, my Elizabeth, the bold words glided off into a decent gloss—'*He durst not,*' said Warwick, '*because what a noble heart dares least is to belie the plighted word, and what the kind heart shuns most is to wrong the confiding friend.*'"

"It was fortunate," said the duchess, "that Edward took heat at the first words, nor stopped, it seems, for the rest!"

"I was prepared, Jacquetta;—had he asked to see the rest, I should have dropped the scroll into the brazier, as containing what I would not presume to

read. Courage! Edward has seen the merchants; he has flouted Hastings—who would gainsay us. For the rest, Elizabeth, be it yours to speak of affronts paid by the earl to your highness; be it yours, Jacquetta, to rouse Edward's pride by dwelling on Warwick's overweening power. Be it mine to enlist his interest on behalf of his merchandise; be it Margaret's, to move his heart by soft tears for the bold Charolois; and ere a month be told, Warwick shall find his embassy a thriftless laughing-stock, and no shade pass between the house of Woodville and the sun of England."

"I am scarce queen while Warwick is minister," said Elizabeth, vindictively. "How he taunted me in the garden, when we met last!"

"But hark you, daughter and lady liege, hark you! Edward is not prepared for the decisive stroke. I have arranged with Anthony, whose chivalrous follies fit him not for full comprehension of our objects, how upon fair excuse the heir of Burgundy's brother—the Count de la Roche—shall visit London; and the count once here, all is ours! Hush! take up the little one—Edward comes!"

CHAPTER III

WHEREIN MASTER NICHOLAS ALWYN VISITS THE COURT, AND THERE LEARNS MATTER OF WHICH THE ACUTE READER WILL JUDGE FOR HIMSELF

It was a morning towards the end of May (some little time after Edward's gracious reception of the London deputies), when Nicholas Alwyn, accompanied by two servitors armed to the teeth—for they carried with them goods of much value, and even in the broad

daylight, and amidst the most frequented parts of the city, men still confided little in the security of the law, —arrived at the Tower, and was conducted to the presence of the queen.

Elizabeth and her mother were engaged in animated but whispered conversation, when the goldsmith entered; and there was an unusual gaiety in the queen's countenance as she turned to Alwyn and bade him show her his newest gauds.

While, with a curiosity and eagerness that seemed almost childlike, Elizabeth turned over rings, chains, and brooches, scarcely listening to Alwyn's comments on the lustre of the gems or the quaintness of the fashion, the duchess disappeared for a moment, and returned with the Princess Margaret.

This young princess had much of the majestic beauty of her royal brother, but, instead of the frank, careless expression so fascinating in Edward, there was, in her full and curved lip, and bright large eye, something at once of haughtiness and passion, which spoke a decision and vivacity of character beyond her years.

"Choose for thyself, sweetheart and daughter mine," said the duchess, affectionately placing her hand on Margaret's luxuriant hair, "and let the noble visitor we await confess that our rose of England outblooms the world."

The princess coloured with complaisant vanity at these words, and, drawing near the queen, looked silently at a collar of pearls, which Elizabeth held.

"If I may adventure so to say," observed Alwyn, "pearls will mightily beseem her highness's youthful bloom! and lo! here be some adornments for the bodice or partelet, to sort with the collar; not," added the

goldsmith, bowing low, and looking down, "not, perchance, displeasing to her highness, in that they are wrought in the guise of the fleur de lis——"

An impatient gesture in the queen, and a sudden cloud over the fair brow of Margaret, instantly betokened to the shrewd trader that he had committed some most unwelcome error in this last allusion to the alliance with King Louis of France, which, according to rumour, the Earl of Warwick had well nigh brought to a successful negotiation; and to convince him yet more of his mistake, the duchess said haughtily—"Good fellow, be contented to display thy goods, and spare us thy comments. As for thy hideous fleur de lis, an' thy master had no better device, he would not long rest the king's jeweller?"

"I have no heart for the pearls," said Margaret abruptly; "they are at best pale and sicklied. What hast thou of bolder ornament, and more dazzling lustrousness?"

"These emeralds, it is said, were once among the jewels of the great house of Burgundy," observed Nicholas, slowly, and fixing his keen, sagacious look on the royal purchasers.

"Of Burgundy!" exclaimed the queen.

"It is true," said the Duchess of Bedford, looking at the ornament with care, and slightly colouring—for, in fact, the jewels had been a present from Philip the Good to the Duke of Bedford, and the exigencies of the civil wars had led, some time since, first, to their mortgage, or rather pawn, and then to their sale.

The princess passed her arm affectionately round Jacquetta's neck, and said, "If you leave me my choice, I will have none but these emeralds."

The two elder ladies exchanged looks and smiles.

"Hast thou travelled, young man?" asked the duchess.

"Not in foreign parts, gracious lady, but I have lived much with those who have been great wanderers."

"Ah! and what say they of the ancient friends of mine house, the princes of Burgundy?"

"Lady, all men agree that a nobler prince and a juster than Duke Philip never reigned over brave men; and those who have seen the wisdom of his rule, grieve sorely to think so excellent and mighty a lord should have trouble brought to his old age by the turbulence of his son, the Count of Charolois."

Again Margaret's fair brow lowered, and the duchess hastened to answer—"The disputes between princes, young man, can never be rightly understood by such as thou and thy friends. The Count of Charolois is a noble gentleman; and fire in youth will break out. Richard the lion-hearted of England was not less puissant a king for the troubles he occasioned to his sire when prince."

Alwyn bit his lip, to restrain a reply that might not have been well received; and the queen, putting aside the emeralds and a few other trinkets, said, smilingly, to the duchess, "Shall the king pay for these, or have thy learned men yet discovered the great secret?"

"Nay, wicked child," said the duchess, "thou lovest to banter me; and truth to say, more gold has been melted in the crucible than as yet promises ever to come out of it; but my new alchemist, Master Warner, seems to have gone nearer to the result than any I have yet known. Meanwhile the king's treasurer must, perforce, supply the gear to the king's sister."

The queen wrote an order on the officer thus referred

to, who was no other than her own father, Lord Rivers; and Alwyn, putting up his goods, was about to withdraw, when the duchess said, carelessly, "Good youth, the dealings of our merchants are more with Flanders than with France—is it not so?"

"Surely," said Alwyn, "the Flemings are good traders and honest folk."

"It is well known, I trust, in the city of London, that this new alliance with France is the work of their favourite, the Lord Warwick," said the duchess, scornfully; "but whatever the carl does is right with ye of the hood and cap, even though he were to leave yon river without one merchant-mast."

"Whatever be our thoughts, puissant lady," said Alwyn, cautiously, "we give them not vent to the meddling with state affairs."

"Ay," persisted Jacquetta, "thine answer is loyal and discreet. But an' the Lord Warwick had sought alliance with the Count of Charolois, would there have been brighter bonfires than ye will see in Smithfield, when ye hear that business with the Flemings is surrendered for fine words from King Louis the Cunning?"

"We trust too much to our king's love for the citizens of London to fear that surrender, please your highness," answered Alwyn; "our king himself is the first of our merchants, and he hath given a gracious answer to the deputation from our city."

"You speak wisely, sir," said the queen; "and your king will yet defend you from the plots of your enemies. You may retire."

Alwyn, glad to be released from questionings but little to his taste, hastened to depart. At the gate of the royal lodge, he gave his caskets to the servitors

who attended him, and passing slowly along the court-yard, thus soliloquised:—

"Our neighbours the Scotch say, 'It is good fishing in muddy waters;' but he who fishes into the secrets of courts must bait with his head. What mischief doth that crafty quean—the proud duchess—devise? Um! They are thinking still to match the young princess with the hot Count of Charolois. Better for trade, it is true, to be hand in hand with the Flemings; but there are two sides to a loaf. If they play such a trick on the stout earl, he is not a man to sit down and do nothing. More food for the ravens, I fear—more brown bills and bright lances in the green fields of poor England!—and King Louis is an awful carle, to sow flax in his neighbour's house, when the torches are burning. Um! Here is fair Marmaduke. He looks brave in his gay supertunic. Well, sir, and foster-brother, how fare you at court?"

"My dear Nicholas, a merry welcome and hearty to your sharp, thoughtful face. Ah, man! we shall have a gay time for you venders of gewgaws. There are to be revels and jousts—revels in the Tower, and jousts in Smithfield. We gentles are already hard at practice in the tilt-yard."

"Sham battles are better than real ones, Master Nevile! But what is in the wind?"

"A sail, Nicholas! a sail, bound to England! Know that the Count of Charolois has permitted Sir Anthony Count de la Roche, his bastard brother, to come over to London, to cross lances with our own Sir Anthony Lord Scales. It is an old challenge, and right royally will the encounter be held."

"Um!" muttered Alwyn—"this bastard, then, is the carrier pigeon. And," said he, aloud—"is it only

to exchange hard blows that Sir Anthony of Burgundy comes over to confer with Sir Anthony of England? Is there no court rumour of other matters between them?"

"Nay. What else? Plague on you craftsmen? You cannot even comprehend the pleasure and pastime two knights take in the storm of the lists!"

"I humbly avow it, Master Nevile. But it seemeth, indeed, strange to me that the Count of Charolois should take this very moment to send envoys of courtesy, when so sharp a slight has been put on his pride, and so dangerous a blow struck at his interests, as the alliance between the French prince and the Lady Margaret. Bold Charles has some cunning, I trow, which your kinsman of Warwick is not here to detect."

"Tush, man! Trade, I see, teaches ye all so to cheat and overreach, that ye suppose a knight's burgonot is as full of tricks and traps as a citizen's flat-cap. Would, though, that my kinsmen of Warwick *were* here," added Marmaduke, in a low whisper, "for the women and the courtiers are doing their best to belie him."

"Keep thyself clear of them all, Marmaduke," said Alwyn; "for, by the Lord, I see that the evil days are coming once more, fast and dark, and men like thee will again have to choose between friend and friend, kinsman and king. For my part, I say nothing; for I love not fighting, unless compelled to it. But if ever I do fight, it will not be by thy side, under Warwick's broad flag."

"Eh, man?" interrupted the Nevile.

"Nay, nay," continued Nicholas, shaking his head, "I admire the great earl, and were I lord or gentle, the great earl should be my chief. But each to his

order; and the trader's tree grows not out of a baron's walking-staff. King Edward may be a stern ruler, but he is a friend to the goldsmiths, and has just confirmed our charter. Let every man praise the bridge he goes over, as the saw saith. Truce to this talk, Master Nevile. I hear that your young hostess—ehem—Mistress Sibyll, is greatly marvelled at among the court gallants—is it so?"

Marmaduke's frank face grew gloomy. "Alas, dear foster-brother," he said, dropping the somewhat affected tone in which he had before spoken,—"I must confess, to my shame, that I cannot yet get the damsel out of my thoughts, which is what I consider it a point of manhood and spirit to achieve."

"How so?"

"Because, when a maiden chooseth steadily to say nay to your wooing—to follow her heels, and whine and beg, is a dog's duty, not a man's."

"What!" exclaimed Alwyn, in a voice of great eagerness—"mean you to say that you have wooed Sibyll Warner as your wife?"

"Verily, yes!"

"And failed?"

"And failed."

"Poor Marmaduke!"

"There is 'no poor' in the matter, Nick Alwyn," returned Marmaduke, sturdily; "if a girl likes me, well;—if not, there are too many others in the wide world, for a young fellow to break his heart about one. Yet," he added, after a short pause, and with a sigh, —"yet, if thou hast not seen her since she came to the court, thou wilt find her wondrously changed."

"More's the pity!" said Alwyn, reciprocating his friend's sigh.

"I mean that she seems all the comelier for the court air. And beshrew me, I think the Lord Hastings, with his dulcet flatteries, hath made it a sort of frenzy for all the gallants to flock round her."

"I should like to see Master Warner again," said Alwyn;—"where lodges he?"

"Yonder—by the little postern, on the third flight of the turret that flanks the corridor,* next to Friar Bungey, the magician; but it is broad daylight, and therefore not so dangerous—not but thou mayest as well patter an Ave in going upstairs."

"Farewell, Master Nevile," said Alwyn, smiling; "I will seek the mechanician, and if I find there Mistress Sibyll, what shall I say from thee?"

"That young bachelors in the reign of Edward IV. will never want fair feres," answered the Nevile, debbonairly smoothing his lawn partelet.

CHAPTER IV

EXHIBITING THE BENEFITS WHICH ROYAL PATRONAGE CONFERS ON GENIUS. ALSO THE EARLY LOVES OF THE LORD HASTINGS; WITH OTHER MATTERS EDIFYING AND DELECTABLE

The furnace was still at work, the flame glowed, the bellows heaved, but these were no longer ministering to the service of a mighty and practical invention. The mathematician—the philosopher—had descended to the alchemist. The nature of the TIME had conquered the nature of a GENIUS meant to subdue time. Those studies that had gone so far to forestall the

* This description refers to that part of the Tower called the King's or Queen's Lodge, and long since destroyed.

master-triumph of far later ages, were exchanged for occupations that played with the toys of infant wisdom. O! true Tartarus of Genius—when its energies are misapplied, when the labour but rolls the stone up the mountain, but pours water upon water through the sieve!

There is a sanguineness in men of great intellect, which often leads them into follies avoided by the dull. When Adam Warner saw the ruin of his contrivance; when he felt that time and toil, and money were necessary to its restoration; and when the gold he lacked was placed before him as a reward for alchemical labours—he at first turned to alchemy, as he would have turned to the plough—as he had turned to conspiracy—simply as a means to his darling end. But by rapid degrees the fascination which all the elder sages experienced in the grand secret, exercised its witchery over his mind. If Roger Bacon, though catching the notion of the steam-engine, devoted himself to the philosopher's stone—if even in so much more enlightened an age, Newton had wasted some precious hours in the transmutation of metals, it was natural that the solitary sage of the reign of Edward IV. should grow, for a while at least, wedded to a pursuit which promised results so august. And the worst of alchemy is, that it always allures on its victims: one gets so near, and so near the object—it seems that so small an addition will complete the sum! So there he was—this great practical genius, hard at work on turning copper into gold!

"Well, Master Warner," said the young goldsmith, entering the student's chamber—"methinks you scarcely remember your friend and visitor, Nicholas Alwyn?"

"Remember, oh, certes! doubtless one of the gentlemen present when they proposed to put me to the brake *—please to stand a little on this side—what is your will?"

"I am not a gentleman, and I should have been loth to stand idly by when the torture was talked of, for a free-born Englishman, let alone a scholar. And where is your fair daughter, Master Warner? I suppose you see but little of her now she is the great dame's waiting-damsel?"

"And why so, Master Alwyn?" asked a charming voice; and Alwyn, for the first time, perceived the young form of Sibyll, by the embrasure of a window, from which might be seen in the court below, a gay group of lords and courtiers, with the plain, dark dress of Hastings, contrasting their gaudy surcoats, glittering with cloth of gold. Alwyn's tongue clove to his mouth; all he had to say was forgotten in a certain bashful and indescribable emotion.

The alchemist had returned to his furnace, and the young man and the girl were as much alone as if Adam Warner had been in heaven.

"And why should the daughter forsake the sire more in a court where love is rare, than in the humbler home, where they may need each other less?"

"I thank thee for the rebuke, mistress," said Alwyn, delighted with her speech; "for I should have been sorry to see thy heart spoiled by the vanities that kill most natures." Scarcely had he uttered these words, than they seemed to him overbold and presuming; for his eye now took in the great change of which Marmaduke had spoken. Sibyll's dress beseemed the new rank which she held: the corset,

* Brake, the old word for rack.

fringed with gold, and made of the finest thread, showed the exquisite contour of the throat and neck, whose ivory it concealed. The kirtle of rich blue became the fair complexion and dark chestnut hair; and over all she wore that most graceful robe called the sasquenice, of which the old French poet sang:

"Car nulle robe n'est si belle,
A dame ne à demoiselle."

This garment, worn over the rest of the dress, had perhaps a classical origin, and with slight variations, may be seen on the Etruscan vases; it was long and loose—of the whitest and finest linen—with hanging sleeves, and open at the sides. But it was not the mere dress that had embellished the young maiden's form and aspect—it was rather an indefinable alteration in the expression and the bearing. She looked as if born to the air of courts; still modest, indeed, and simple—but with a consciousness of dignity, and almost of power; and in fact the woman had been taught the power that womanhood possesses. She had been admired, followed, flattered; she had learned the authority of beauty. Her accomplishments, uncommon in that age among her sex, had aided her charm of person; her natural pride, which, though hitherto latent, was high and ardent, fed her heart with sweet hopes—a bright career seemed to extend before her; and, at peace as to her father's safety—relieved from the drudging cares of poverty—her fancy was free to follow the phantasms of sanguine youth through the airy land of dreams. And therefore it was that the maid was changed!

At the sight of the delicate beauty—the self-possessed expression—the courtly dress—the noble air

of Sibyll—Nicholas Alwyn recoiled, and turned pale —he no longer marvelled at her rejection of Marmaduke, and he started at the remembrance of the bold thoughts which he had dared himself to indulge.

The girl smiled at the young man's confusion.

"It is not prosperity that spoils the heart," she said, touchingly, "unless it be mean indeed. Thou rememberest, Master Alwyn, that when God tried his saint, it was by adversity and affliction."

"May thy trial in these last be over," answered Alwyn; "but the humble must console their state by thinking that the great have their trials too; and, as our homely adage hath it, 'That is not always good in the maw which is sweet in the mouth.' Thou seest much of my gentle foster-brother, Mistress Sibyll?"

"But in the court dances, Master Alwyn; for most of the hours in which my lady duchess needs me not are spent here. Oh, my father hopes great things! and now at last fame dawns upon him."

"I rejoice to hear it, mistress; and so, having paid ye both my homage, I take my leave, praying that I may visit you from time to time, if it be only to consult this worshipful master, touching certain improvements in the horologe, in which his mathematics can doubtless instruct me—Farewell. I have some jewels to show to the Lady of Bonville."

"The Lady of Bonville!" repeated Sibyll, changing colour; "she is a dame of notable loveliness."

"So men say—and mated to a foolish lord; but scandal, which spares few, breathes not on her—rare praise for a court dame. Few houses can have the boast of Lord Warwick's—'that all the men are without fear, and all the women without stain.'"

"It is said," observed Sibyll, looking down, "that

my Lord Hastings once much affectioned the Lady Bonville. Hast thou heard such gossip?"

"Surely, yes; in the city we hear all the tales of the court; for many a courtier, following King Edward's exemplar, dines with the citizen to-day, that he may borrow gold from the citizen to-morrow. Surely, yes; and hence, they say, the small love the wise Hastings bears to the stout earl."

"How runs the tale? Be seated, Master Alwyn."

"Marry, thus, when William Hastings was but a squire, and much favoured by Richard, Duke of York, he lifted his eyes to the Lady Katherine Nevile, sister to the Earl of Warwick; and in beauty and in dower, as in birth, a mate for a king's son."

"And, doubtless, the Lady Katherine returned his love?"

"So it is said, maiden; and the Earl of Salisbury her father, and Lord Warwick her brother, discovered the secret, and swore that no new man (the stout earl's favourite word of contempt), though he were made a duke, should give to an upstart posterity the quarterings of Montagu and Nevile. Marry, Mistress Sibyll, there is a north country and pithy proverb, 'Happy is the man whose father went to the devil.' Had some old Hastings been a robber and extortioner, and left to brave William the heirship of his wickedness in lordships and lands, Lord Warwick had not called him 'a new man.' Master Hastings was dragged, like a serf's son, before the earl on his dais; and be sure he was rated soundly, for his bold blood was up, and he defied the earl, as a gentleman born, to single battle. Then the earl's followers would have fallen on him; and in those days, under King Henry, he who bearded a baron in his hall must have

a troop at his back, or was like to have a rope round his neck; but the earl (for the lion is not as fierce as they paint him) came down from his dais, and said, 'Man, I like thy spirit, and I myself will dub thee knight, that I may pick up thy glove and give thee battle.'"

"And they fought? Brave Hastings!"

"No. For, whether the Duke of York forbade it, or whether the Lady Katherine would not hear of such strife between fere and frere, I know not; but Duke Richard sent Hastings to Ireland, and, a month after, the Lady Katherine married Lord Bonville's son and heir—so, at least tell the gossips and sing the ballad-mongers. Men add, that Lord Hastings still loves the dame, though, certes, he knows how to console himself."

"Loves her! Nay, nay,—I trow not," answered Sibyll, in a low voice, and with a curl of her dewy lip.

At this moment the door opened gently and Lord Hastings himself entered. He came in with the familiarity of one accustomed to the place.

"And how fares the grand secret, Master Warner? —Sweet mistress! thou seemest lovelier to me in this dark chamber than outshining all in the galliard. Ha! Master Alwyn, I owe thee many thanks for making me know first the rare arts of this fair emblazoner. Move me yon stool, good Alwyn."

As the goldsmith obeyed, he glanced from Hastings to the blushing face and heaving bosom of Sibyll, and a deep and exquisite pang shot through his heart. It was not jealousy alone; it was anxiety, compassion, terror. The powerful Hastings — the ambitious lord—the accomplished libertine—what a fate for poor Sibyll, if for such a man the cheek blushed, and the bosom heaved!

"Well, Master Warner," resumed Hastings, "thou art still silent as to thy progress."

The philosopher uttered an impatient groan.

"Ah, I comprehend. The goldmaker must not speak of his craft before the goldsmith. Good Alwyn, thou mayest retire. All arts have their mysteries."

Alwyn, with a sombre brow, moved to the door.

"In sooth," he said, "I have overtarried, good my lord. The Lady Bonville will chide me; for she is of no patient temper."

"Bridle thy tongue, artisan, and begone!" said Hastings, with unusual haughtiness and petulance.

"I stung him there," muttered Alwyn, as he withdrew—"Oh! fool that I was to—nay, I *thought* it never, I did but *dream* it. What wonder we traders hate these silken lords. They reap—we sow—they trifle—we toil—they steal with soft words into the hearts which—Oh! Marmaduke, thou art right—right!—Stout men sit not down to weep beneath the willow. But she—the poor maiden!—she looked so haughty and so happy. This is early May; will she wear that look when the autumn leaves are strewn?"

CHAPTER V

THE WOODVILLE INTRIGUE PROSPERS—MONTAGU CONFERS WITH HASTINGS—VISITS THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, AND IS MET ON THE ROAD BY A STRANGE PERSONAGE

And now the one topic at the court of King Edward IV. was the expected arrival of Anthony of Burgundy, Count de la Roche, bastard brother of Charolois, afterwards, as Duke of Burgundy, so famous as

Charles the Bold. Few, indeed, out of the immediate circle of the Duchess of Bedford's confidants, regarded the visit of this illustrious foreigner as connected with any object beyond the avowed one of chivalrous encounter with Anthony Woodville, the fulfilment of a challenge given by the latter two years before, at the time of the queen's coronation. The origin of this challenge, Anthony Woodville Lord Scales has himself explained in a letter to the bastard, still extant, and of which an extract may be seen in the popular and delightful biographies of Miss Strickland.*

It seems that, on the Wednesday before Easter Day, 1465, as Sir Anthony was speaking to his royal sister, "on his knees," all the ladies of the court gathered round him, and bound to his left knee a band of gold, adorned with stones fashioned into the letters S. S. (souvenance or remembrance), and to this band was suspended an enamelled "Forget-me-not." "And one of the ladies said that 'he ought to take a step fitting for the times.'" This step was denoted by a letter on vellum, bound with a gold thread, placed in his cap; and having obtained the king's permission to bring the adventure of the flower of souvenance to a conclusion, the gallant Anthony forwarded the articles and the enamelled flower to the bastard of Burgundy, beseeching him to touch the latter with his knightly hand, in token of his accepting the challenge. The Count de la Roche did so, but was not sent by his brother amongst the knights whom Charolois despatched to England, and the combat had been suspended to the present time.

But now the intriguing Rivers and his duchess

* "Queens of England," vol. iii. p. 380.

gladly availed themselves of so fair a pretext for introducing to Edward the able brother of Warwick's enemy, and the French prince's rival, Charles of Burgundy; and Anthony Woodville, too gentle and knightly a person to have abetted their cunning projects in any mode less chivalrous, willingly consented to revive a challenge in honour of the ladies of England.

The only one amongst the courtiers who seemed dissatisfied with the meditated visit of the doughty Burgundian champion was the Lord Montagu. This penetrating and experienced personage was not to be duped by an affectation of that chivalry which, however natural at the court of Edward III., was no longer in unison with the more intriguing and ambitious times over which presided the luxurious husband of Elizabeth Woodville. He had noticed of late, with suspicion, that Edward had held several councils with the anti-Nevile faction, from which he himself was excluded. The king, who heretofore had delighted in his companionship, had shown him marks of coldness and estrangement, and there was an exulting malice in the looks of the Duchess of Bedford, which augured some approaching triumph over the great family which the Woodvilles so openly laboured to supplant. One day, as Marmaduke was loitering in the courtyard of the Tower, laughing and jesting with his friends, Lord Montagu, issuing from the king's closet, passed him with a hurried step and a thoughtful brow. This haughty brother of the Earl of Warwick had so far attended to the recommendation of the latter, that he had with some courtesy excused himself to Marmaduke for his language in the archery-ground, and had subsequently, when seeing

him in attendance on the king, honoured him with a stately nod, or a brief "Good morrow, young kinsman." But as his eye now rested on Marmaduke, while the group vailed their bonnets to the powerful courtier, he called him forth, with a familiar smile he had never before assumed, and drawing him apart, and leaning on his shoulder, much to the envy of the standers by, he said, caressingly—

"Dear Kinsman Guy——"

"Marmaduke, please you, my lord.

"Dear kinsman Marmaduke, my brother esteems you for your father's sake. And, sooth to say, the Neviles are not so numerous in court as they were. Business and state matters have made me see too seldom those whom I would most affect. Wilt thou ride with me to the More Park? I would present thee to my brother the archbishop."

"If the king would graciously hold me excused."

"The king, sir! when *I*—I forgot," said Montagu, checking himself—"oh, as to that, the king stirs not out to-day! He hath with him a score of tailors and armourers, in high council on the coming festivities. I will warrant thy release; and here comes Hastings, who shall confirm it."

"Fair my lord!"—as at that moment Hastings emerged from the little postern that gave egress from the apartments occupied by the alchemist of the Duchess of Bedford—"wilt thou be pleased, in thy capacity of chamberlain, to sanction my cousin in a day's absence? I would confer with him on family matters."

"Certes, a small favour to so deserving a youth. I will see to his deputy."

"A word with you, Hastings," said Montagu,

thoughtfully, and he drew aside his fellow courtier: "what thinkest thou of this Burgundy bastard's visit?"

"That it has given a peacock's strut to the popinjay, Anthony Woodville."

"Would that were all," returned Montagu. "But the very moment that Warwick is negotiating with Louis of France, this interchange of courtesies with Louis's deadly foe, the Count of Charolois, is out of season."

"Nay, take it not so gravely—a mere pastime."

"Hastings, thou knowest better. But thou art no friend of my great brother."

"Small cause have I to be so," answered Hastings, with a quivering lip. "To him and your father, I owe as deep a curse as ever fell on the heart of man. I have lived to be above even Lord Warwick's insult. Yet young, I stand amongst the warriors and peers of England, with a crest as haught, and a scutcheon as stainless as the best. I have drunk deep of the world's pleasures. I command, as I list, the world's gaudy pomps, and I tell thee, that all my success in life countervails not the agony of the hour, when all the bloom and loveliness of the earth faded into winter, and the only woman I ever loved was sacrificed to her brother's pride."

The large drops stood on the pale brow of the fortunate noble as he thus spoke, and his hollow voice affected even the worldly Montagu.

"Tush, Hastings!" said Montagu, kindly; "these are but a young man's idle memories. Are we not all fated, in our early years, to love in vain?—even I married not the maiden I thought the fairest, and held the dearest. For the rest, bethink thee—thou wert then but a simple squire."

"But of as ancient and pure a blood as ever rolled its fiery essence through a Norman's veins."

"It may be so; but old houses, when impoverished, are cheaply held. And thou must confess thou wert then no mate for Katherine. *Now*, indeed, it were different; now a Nevile might be proud to call Hastings brother."

"I know it," said Hastings, proudly—"I know it, my lord, and why? Because I have gold, and land, and the king's love, and can say, as the Centurion to my fellow-man, 'Do this, and he doeth it;' and yet I tell thee, Lord Montagu, that I am less worthy now the love of beauty, the right hand of fellowship from a noble spirit, than I was then—when—the simple squire—my heart full of truth and loyalty, with lips that had never lied, with a soul never polluted by unworthy pleasures or mean intrigues, I felt that Katherine Nevile should never blush to own her fere and plighted lord in William de Hastings. Let this pass—let it pass. You call me no friend to Warwick. True! but I am a friend to the king he has served, and the land of my birth to which he has given peace; and. therefore, not till Warwick desert Edward, not till he wake the land again to broil and strife, will I mingle in the plots of those who seek his downfall. If, in my office and stated rank, I am compelled to countenance the pageant of this mock tournament, and seem to honour the coming of the Count de la Roche, I will at least stand aloof and free from all attempt to apply a gaudy pageant to a dangerous policy; and on this pledge, Montagu, I give you my knightly hand."

"It suffices," answered Montagu, pressing the hand extended to him. "But the other day I heard the

king's dissour tell him a tale of some tyrant, who silently showed a curious questioner how to govern a land, by cutting down, with his staff, the heads of the tallest poppies; and the Duchess of Bedford turned to me, and asked—'What says a Nevile to the application?' 'Faith, lady,' said I, 'the Nevile poppies have oak stems.' Believe me, Hastings, these Woodvilles may grieve, and wrong, and affront Lord Warwick, but woe to all the pigmy goaders when the lion turns at bay."

With this solemn menace, Montagu quitted Hastings, and passed on, leaning upon Marmaduke, and with a gloomy brow.

At the gate of the palace waited the Lord Montagu's palfrey and his retinue of twenty squires and thirty grooms. "Mount, Master Marmaduke, and take thy choice among these steeds, for we shall ride alone. There is no Nevile amongst these gentlemen." Marmaduke obeyed. The earl dismissed his retinue, and in little more than ten minutes,—so different, then, was the extent of the metropolis,—the noble and the squire were amidst the open fields.

They had gone several miles, at a brisk trot, before the earl opened his lips, and then, slackening his pace, he said abruptly, "How dost thou like the king? Speak out, youth; there are no eavesdroppers here."

"He is a most gracious master, and a most winning gentleman."

"He is both," said Montagu, with a touch of emotion, that surprised Marmaduke, "and no man can come near without loving him. And yet, Marmaduke (is that thy name?)—yet, whether it be weakness or falseness, no man can be sure of his king's favour from day to day! We Neviles must hold fast to each other.

Not a stick should be lost if the fagot is to remain unbroken. What say you?" and the earl's keen eye turned sharply on the young man.

"I say, my lord, that the Earl of Warwick was to me patron, lord, and father, when I entered yon city a friendless orphan; and that, though I covet honours, and love pleasure, and would be loth to lift finger or speak word against King Edward, yet were that princely lord—the head of mine house—an outcast and a beggar, by his side I would wander, for his bread I would beg."

"Young man," exclaimed Montagu, "from this hour I admit thee to my heart! Give me thy hand. Beggar and outcast?—No!—If the storm come, the meaner birds take to shelter, the eagle remains solitary in heaven!" So saying, he relapsed into silence, and put spurs to his steed.

Towards the decline of day they drew near to the favourite palace of the Archbishop of York. There, the features of the country presented a more cultivated aspect than it had hitherto worn. For at that period the lands of the churchmen were infinitely in advance of those of the laity in the elementary arts of husbandry, partly because the ecclesiastic proprietors had greater capital at their command, partly because their superior learning had taught them to avail themselves, in some measure, of the instructions of the Latin writers. Still the prevailing characteristic of the scenery was pasture land—immense tracts of common supported flocks of sheep; the fragrance of new-mown hay breathed sweet from many a sunny field. In the rear, stretched woods of Druid growth; and in the narrow lanes, that led to unfrequent farms and homesteads, built almost entirely either of wood or

(more primitive still) of mud and clay, profuse weeds, brambles, and wild flowers, almost concealed the narrow pathway, never intended for cart or waggon, and arrested the slow path of the ragged horse bearing the scanty produce of acres to yard or mill. But, though to the eye of an economist or philanthropist, broad England now, with its variegated agriculture, its wide roads, its white-walled villas, and numerous towns, may present a more smiling countenance,—to the early lover of Nature, fresh from the child-like age of poetry and romance, the rich and lovely verdure which gave to our mother-country the name of "Green England;" its wild woods and covert alleys, proffering adventure to fancy; its tranquil heaths, studded with peaceful flocks, and vocal, from time to time, with the rude scrannel of the shepherd—had a charm which we can understand alone by the luxurious reading of our elder writers. For the country itself ministered to that mingled fancy and contemplation which the stirring and ambitious life of towns and civilisation has in much banished from our later literature.

Even the thoughtful Montagu relaxed his brow as he gazed around, and he said to Marmaduke, in a gentle and subdued voice—

"Methinks, young cousin, that in such scenes, those silly rhymes, taught us in our childhood, of the green woods and the summer cuckoos, of bold Robin and Maid Marian, ring back in our ears. Alas, that this fair land should be so often dyed in the blood of her own children! Here, how the thought shrinks from broils and war—civil war—war between brother and brother, son and father! In the city and the court, we forget others overmuch, from the too keen memory of ourselves."

Scarcely had Montagu said these words, before there suddenly emerged from a bosky lane to the right a man mounted upon a powerful roan horse. His dress was that of a substantial franklin; a green surtout of broad cloth, over a tight vest of the same colour, left, to the admiration of a soldierly eye, an expanse of chest that might have vied with the mighty strength of Warwick himself. A cap, somewhat like a turban, fell in two ends over the left cheek, till they touched the shoulder, and the upper part of the visage was concealed by a half-wizard, not unfrequently worn out of doors with such head-gear, as a shade from the sun. Behind this person rode, on a horse equally powerful, a man of shorter stature, but scarcely less muscular a frame, clad in a leathern jerkin, curiously fastened with thongs, and wearing a steel bonnet, projecting far over the face.

The foremost of these strangers, coming thus unawares upon the courtiers, reined in his steed, and said, in a clear, full voice—"Good evening to you, my masters. It is not often that these roads witness riders in silk and pile."

"Friend," quoth the Montagu, "may the peace we enjoy under the White Rose increase the number of all travellers through our land, whether in pile or russet!"

"Peace, sir!" returned the horseman, roughly—"peace is no blessing to poor men, unless it brings something more than life—the means to live in security and ease. Peace hath done nothing for the poor of England. Why, look you towards yon grey tower,—the owner is, forsooth, gentleman and knight; but yesterday, he and his men broke open a yeoman's house, carried off his wife and daughters to his tower,

and refuseth to surrender them till ransomed by half the year's produce on the yeoman's farm."

"A caitiff and illegal act," said Montagu.

"Illegal! But the law will notice it not—why should it? Unjust, if it punish the knight, and dare not touch the king's brother!"

"How, sir?"

"I say the king's brother. Scarcely a month since, twenty-four persons under George Duke of Clarence, entered by force a lady's house, and seized her jewels and her money, upon some charge, God wot, of contriving mischief to the boy-duke.* Are not the Commons ground by imposts for the queen's kindred? Are not the king's officers and purveyors licensed spoilers and rapiners? Are not the old chivalry banished for new upstarts? And in all this, is peace better than war?"

"Knowest thou not that these words are death, man?"

"Ay, in the city! but in the fields and waste, thought is free. Frown not, my lord. Ah! I know you, and the time may come when the baron will act what the franklin speaks. What! think you I see not the signs of the storm? Are Warwick and Montagu more safe with Edward than they were with Henry? Look to thyself! Charolois will outwit King Louis, and ere the year be out, the young Margaret of England will be lady of your brave brother's sternest foe!"

"And who art thou, knave?" cried Montagu, aghast, and laying his gloved hand on the bold prophet's bridle.

* See for this and other instances of the prevalent contempt of law in the reign of Edward IV., and, indeed, during the fifteenth century, the extracts from the Parliamentary Rolls, quoted by Sharon Turner, "History of England," vol. iii., p. 399.

"One who has sworn the fall of the house of York, and may live to fight, side by side, in that cause with Warwick; for Warwick, whatever be his faults, has an English heart, and loves the Commons."

Montagu, uttering an exclamation of astonishment, relaxed hold of the franklin's bridle; and the latter waved his hand, and spurring his steed across the wild chain of commons, disappeared with his follower.

"A sturdy traitor!" muttered the earl, following him with his eye. "One of the exiled Lancastrian lords, perchance. Strange how they pierce into our secrets! heardst thou that fellow, Marmaduke?"

"Only in a few sentences, and those brought my hand to my dagger. But as thou madest no sign, I thought his grace the king could not be much injured by empty words."

"True! and misfortune has ever a shrewish tongue."

"An it please you, my lord," quoth Marmaduke, "I have seen the man before, and it seemeth to me that he holds much power over the rascal rabble." And here Marmaduke narrated the attack upon Warner's house, and how it was frustrated by the intercession of Robin of Redesdale.

"Art thou sure it is the same man, for his face was masked?"

"My lord, in the north, as thou knowest, we recognise men by their forms, not faces, as, in truth, we ought, seeing that it is the sinews and bulk, not the lips and nose, that make a man a useful friend or dangerous foe."

Montagu smiled at this soldierly simplicity.

"And heard you the name the raptrils shouted?"

"Robin, my lord. They cried out 'Robin,' as if it had been a 'Montagu' or a 'Warwick.'"

"Robin! ah, then I guess the man—a most perilous and stanch Lancastrian. He has more weight with the poor than had Cade the rebel, and they say Margaret trusts him as much as she doth an Exeter or Somerset. I marvel that he should show himself so near the gates of London. It must be looked to. But come, cousin. Our steeds are breathed—let us on!"

On arriving at the More, its stately architecture, embellished by the prelate with a façade of double arches, painted and blazoned somewhat in the fashion of certain old Italian houses, much dazzled Marmaduke. And the splendour of the archbishop's retinue—less martial, indeed, than Warwick's—was yet more imposing to the common eye. Every office that pomp could devise for a king's court was to be found in the household of this magnificent prelate:—master of the horse and the hounds, chamberlain, treasurer, pursuivant, herald, seneschal, captain of the body-guard, &c.—and all emulously sought for and proudly held by gentlemen of the first blood and birth. His mansion was at once a court for middle life, a school for youth, an asylum for age; and thither, as to a Medici, fled the letters and the arts.

Through corridor and hall, lined with pages and squires, passed Montagu and Marmaduke, till they gained a quaint garden, the wonder and envy of the time, planned by an Italian of Mantua, and perhaps the stateliest one of the kind existent in England. Straight walks, terraces, and fountains, clipped trees, green alleys and smooth bowling-greens abounded, but the flowers were few and common: and if here and there a statue might be found, it possessed none of the art so admirable in our earliest ecclesiastical architecture, but its clumsy proportions were made more un-

couth by a proportion of barbaric painting and gilding. The fountains, however, were especially curious, diversified, and elaborate: some shot up as pyramids, others coiled in undulating streams, each jet chasing the other as serpents; some, again, branched off in the form of trees, while mimic birds, perched upon leaden boughs, poured water from their bills. Marmaduke, much astounded and bewildered, muttered a pater-noster in great haste; and even the clerical rank of the prelate did not preserve him from the suspicion of magical practices in the youth's mind.

Remote from all his train, in a little arbour overgrown with the honeysuckle and white rose, a small table before him bearing fruits, confectionery, and spiced wines (for the prelate was a celebrated epicure, though still in the glow of youth), they found George Nevile, reading lazily a Latin MS.

"Well, my dear lord and brother," said Montagu, laying his arm on the prelate's shoulder—"first let me present to thy favour a gallant youth, Marmaduke Nevile, worthy his name, and thy love."

"He is welcome, Montagu, to our poor house," said the archbishop, rising, and complacently glancing at his palace, splendidly gleaming through the trellis-work. "'*Puer ingenui vultûs.*' Thou art acquainted, doubtless, young sir, with the Humaner Letters?"

"Well-a-day, my lord, my nurturing was somewhat neglected in the province," said Marmaduke, disconcerted, and deeply blushing, "and only of late have I deemed the languages fit study for those not reared for our Mother Church."

"Fie, sir, fie! Correct that error, I pray thee. Latin teaches the courtier how to thrive, the soldier how to manœuvre, the husbandman how to sow; and if we

churchmen are more cunning, as the profane call us (and the prelate smiled), than ye of the laity, the Latin must answer for the sins of our learning."

With this, the archbishop passed his arm affectionately through his brother's, and said, "Beshrew me, Montagu, thou lookest worn and weary. Surely thou lackest food, and supper shall be hastened. Even I, who have but slender appetite, grow hungered in these cool gloaming hours."

"Dismiss my comrade, George—I would speak to thee," whispered Montagu.

"Thou knowest not Latin?" said the archbishop, turning with a compassionate eye to Nevile, whose own eye was amorously fixed on the delicate confectioneries—"never too late to learn. Hold, here is a grammar of the verbs, that, with mine own hand, I have drawn up for youth. Study thine *amo* and thy *moneo,* while I confer on church matters with giddy Montagu. I shall expect, ere we sup, that thou wilt have mastered the first tenses."

"But——"

"Oh, nay, nay; but me no buts. Thou art too tough, I fear me, for flagellation, a wondrous improver of tender youth"—and the prelate forced his grammar into the reluctant hands of Marmaduke, and sauntered down one of the solitary alleys with his brother.

Long and earnest was their conference, and at one time keen were their disputes.

The archbishop had very little of the energy of Montagu or the impetuosity of Warwick, but he had far more of what we now call *mind,* as distinct from *talent,* than either: that is, he had not their capacities for action, but he had a judgment and sagacity that made him considered a wise and sound adviser: this he

owed principally to the churchman's love of ease, and to his freedom from the wear and tear of the passions which gnawed the great minister and the aspiring courtier; his natural intellect was also fostered by much learning. George Nevile had been reared, by an Italian ecclesiastic, in all the subtle diplomacy of the church; and his ambition, despising lay objects (though he consented to hold the office of chancellor), was concentrated in that kingdom over kings, which had animated the august dominators of religious Rome. Though, as we have said, still in that age when the affections are usually vivid,* George Nevile loved no human creature—not even his brothers—not even King Edward, who, with all his vices, possessed so eminently the secret that wins men's hearts. His early and entire absorption in the great religious community, which stood apart from the laymen in order to control them, alienated him from his kind; and his superior instruction only served to feed him with a calm and icy contempt for all that prejudice, as he termed it, held dear and precious. He despised the knight's wayward honour—the burgher's crafty honesty. For him no such thing as principle existed; and conscience itself lay dead in the folds of a fancied exemption from all responsibility to the dull herd, that were but as wool and meat to the churchman-shepherd. But withal, if somewhat pedantic, he had in his manner a suavity and elegance and polish, which suited well his high station, and gave persuasion to his counsels. In all externals, he was as little like a priest as the high-born prelates of that day usually were. In dress, he rivalled the fopperies of the Plantagenet

* He was consecrated Bishop of Exeter at the age of twenty, at twenty-six he became Archbishop of York, and was under thirty at the time referred to in the text.

brothers. In the chase, he was more ardent than Warwick had been in his earlier youth; and a dry sarcastic humour, sometimes elevated into wit, gave liveliness to his sagacious converse.

Montagu desired that the archbishop and himself should demand solemn audience of Edward, and gravely remonstrate with the king on the impropriety of receiving the brother of a rival suitor, while Warwick was negotiating the marriage of Margaret with a prince of France.

"Nay," said the archbishop, with a bland smile, that fretted Montagu to the quick—"surely, even a baron, a knight, a franklin—a poor priest like myself, would rise against the man who dictated to his hospitality. Is a king less irritable than baron, knight, franklin, and priest?—or rather, being, as it were, *per legem*, lord of all, hath he not irritability eno' for all four? Ay—tut and tush as thou wilt, John—but thy sense must do justice to my counsel at the last. I know Edward well; he hath something of mine own idleness and ease of temper, but with more of the dozing lion than priests, who have only, look you, the mildness of the dove. Prick up his higher spirit, not by sharp remonstrance, but by seeming trust. Observe to him, with thy gay, careless laugh—which, methinks, thou hast somewhat lost of late—that with any other prince, Warwick might suspect some snare—some humiliating overthrow of his embassage—but that all men know how steadfast in faith and honour is Edward IV."

"Truly," said Montagu, with a forced smile, "you understand mankind; but yet, bethink you—suppose this fail, and Warwick return to England to hear that he hath been cajoled and fooled; that the Margaret

he had crossed the seas to affiance to the brother of Louis is betrothed to Charolois—bethink you, I say, what manner of heart beats under our brother's mail."

"*Impiger, iracundus!*" said the archbishop; "a very Achilles, to whom our English Agamemnon, if he cross him, is a baby. All this is sad truth; our parents spoilt him in his childhood, and glory in his youth, and wealth, power, success, in his manhood. Ay! if Warwick be chafed, it will be as the stir of the sea-serpent, which, according to the Icelanders, moves a world. Still, the best way to prevent the danger is to enlist the honour of the king in his behalf—to show that our eyes are open, but that we disdain to doubt, and are frank to confide. Meanwhile send messages and warnings privately to Warwick."

These reasonings finally prevailed with Montagu, and the brothers returned with one mind to the house. Here, as after their ablutions, they sat down to the evening meal, the archbishop remembered poor Marmaduke, and despatched to him one of his thirty household chaplains. Marmaduke was found fast asleep over the second tense of the verb *amo*.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARRIVAL OF THE COUNT DE LA ROCHE, AND THE VARIOUS EXCITEMENT PRODUCED ON MANY PERSONAGES BY THAT EVENT

The prudence of the archbishop's counsel was so far made manifest, that on the next day Montagu found all remonstrance would have been too late. The Count de la Roche had already landed, and was on his way to London. The citizens, led by Rivers par-

tially to suspect the object of the visit, were delighted not only by the prospect of a brilliant pageant, but by the promise such a visit conveyed of a continued peace with their commercial ally; and the preparations made by the wealthy merchants increased the bitterness and discontent of Montagu. At length, at the head of a gallant and princely retinue, the Count de la Roche entered London. Though Hastings made no secret of his distaste to the Count de la Roche's visit, it became his office as lord chamberlain to meet the count at Blackwall, and escort him and his train, in gilded barges, to the palace.

In the great hall of the Tower, in which the story of Antiochus was painted, by the great artists employed under Henry III., and on the elevation of the daïs, behind which, across Gothic columns, stretched draperies of cloth of gold, was placed Edward's chair of state. Around him were grouped the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, the Lords Worcester, Montagu, Rivers, D'Eyncourt, St. John, Raoul de Fulke, and others. But at the threshold of the chamber stood Anthony Woodville, the knightly challenger, his knee bound by the ladye-badge of the S. S., and his fine person clad in white-flowered velvet of Genoa, adorned with pearls. Stepping forward, as the count appeared, the gallant Englishman bent his knee half-way to the ground, and raising the count's hand to his lips, said in French—"Deign, noble sir, to accept the gratitude of one who were not worthy of encounter from so peerless a hand, save by the favour of the ladies of England, and your own courtesy, which ennobles him whom it stoops to." So saying, he led the count towards the king.

De la Roche, an experienced and profound courtier,

and justly deserving Hall's praise as a man of "great witte, courage, valiantness, and liberalitie," did not affect to conceal the admiration which the remarkable presence of Edward never failed to excite; lifting his hand to his eyes, as if to shade them from a sudden blaze of light, he would have fallen on both knees, but Edward with quick condescension raised him, and, rising himself, said gaily—

"Nay, Count de la Roche, brave and puissant chevalier, who hath crossed the seas in honour of knighthood and the ladies — we would, indeed, that our roiaulme boasted a lord like thee, from whom we might ask such homage. But since thou art not our subject, it consoles us at least that thou art our guest. By our halidame, Lord Scales, thou must look well to thy lance and thy steeds' girths, for never, I trow, hast thou met a champion of goodlier strength and knightlier mettle."

"My lord king," answered the count, "I fear me, indeed, that a knight like the Sieur Anthony, who fights under the eyes of such a king, will prove invincible. Did kings enter the lists with kings, where, through broad Christendom, find a compeer for your highness?"

"Your brother, Sir Count, if fame lies not," returned Edward, slightly laughing, and lightly touching the bastard's shoulder, "were a fearful lance to encounter, even though Charlemagne himself were to revive, with his twelve paladins at his back. Tell us, Sir Count," added the king, drawing himself up— "tell us, for we soldiers are curious in such matters, hath not the Count of Charolois the advantage of all here in sinews and stature?"

"Sire," returned De la Roche, "my princely brother

is indeed mighty with the brand and battle-axe, but your grace is taller by half the head,—and, peradventure, of even a more stalwart build, but that mere strength in your highness is not that gift of God which strikes the beholder most."

Edward smiled good-humouredly at a compliment, the truth of which was too obvious to move much vanity, and said with a royal and knightly grace—"Our house of York hath been taught, Sir Count, to estimate men's beauty by men's deeds, and therefore the Count of Charolois hath long been known to us—who, alas, have seen him not!—as the fairest gentleman of Europe. My Lord Scales, we must here publicly crave your pardon. Our brother-in-law, Sir Count, would fain have claimed his right to hold you his guest, and have graced himself by exclusive service to your person. We have taken from him his lawful office, for we kings are jealous, and would not have our subjects more honoured than ourselves." Edward turned round to his courtiers as he spoke, and saw that his last words had called a haughty and angry look to the watchful countenance of Montagu. "Lord Hastings," he continued, "to your keeping, as our representative, we intrust this gentleman. He must need refreshment ere we present him to our queen."

The count bowed to the ground, and reverently withdrew from the royal presence, accompanied by Hastings. Edward then, singling Anthony Woodville and Lord Rivers from the group, broke up the audience, and, followed by those two noblemen, quitted the hall.

Montagu, whose countenance had recovered the dignified and high-born calm habitual to it, turned to the Duke of Clarence, and observed, indifferently—"The Count de la Roche hath a goodly mien, and a fair tongue."

"Pest on these Burgundians!" answered Clarence, in an undertone, and drawing Montagu aside—"I would wager my best greyhound to a scullion's cur, that our English knights will lower their burgonots."

"Nay, sir, an idle holiday show. What matters whose lance breaks, or whose destrier stumbles?"

"Will you not, yourself, cousin Montagu—you who are so peerless in the joust—take part in the fray?"

"I, your highness—I, the brother of the Earl of Warwick, whom this pageant hath been devised by the Woodvilles to mortify and disparage in his solemn embassy to Burgundy's mightiest foe!—I!"

"Sooth to say," said the young prince, much embarrassed, "it grieves me sorely to hear thee speak as if Warwick would be angered at this pastime. For, look you, Montagu—I, thinking only of my hate to Burgundy, and my zeal for our English honour, have consented, as high constable, and despite my grudge to the Woodvilles, to bear the bassinet of our own champion—and——"

"Saints in heaven!" exclaimed Montagu, with a burst of his fierce brother's temper, which he immediately checked, and changed into a tone that concealed, beneath outward respect, the keenest irony, "I crave your pardon, humbly, for my vehemence, Prince of Clarence. I suddenly remember me, that humility is the proper virtue of knighthood. Your grace does indeed set a notable example of that virtue to the peers of England; and my poor brother's infirmity of pride will stand rebuked for aye, when he hears that George Plantagenet bore the bassinet of Anthony Woodville."

"But it is for the honour of the ladies," said Clarence, falteringly, "in honour of the fairest maid of all

—the flower of English beauty—the Lady Isabel—that I——"

"Your highness will pardon me," interrupted Montagu, "but I do trust to your esteem for our poor and insulted house of Nevile, so far as to be assured that the name of my niece, Isabel, will not be submitted to the ribald comments of a base-born Burgundian."

"Then I will break no lance in the lists!"

"As it likes you, prince," replied Montagu, shortly; and, with a low bow, he quitted the chamber, and was striding to the outer gate of the Tower, when a sweet, clear voice behind him called him by his name. He turned abruptly, to meet the dark eye and all-subduing smile of the boy-Duke of Gloucester.

"A word with you, Montagu—noblest and most prized, with your princely brothers, of the champions of our house,—I read your generous indignation with our poor Clarence. Ay, sir!—ay!—it was a weakness in him that moved even me. But you have not now to learn that his nature, how excellent soever, is somewhat unsteady. His judgment alone lacks weight and substance,—ever persuaded against his better reason by those who approach his infirmer side. But if it be true that our cousin Warwick intends for him the hand of the peerless Isabel, wiser heads will guide his course."

"My brother," said Montagu, greatly softened, "is much beholden to your highness for a steady countenance and friendship, for which I also, believe me—and the families of Beauchamp, Montagu, and Nevile—are duly grateful. But to speak plainly (with your grace's youthful candour, so all-acknowledged, will permit), the kinsmen of the queen do now so aspire to rule this land, to marry or forbid to marry, not only our own children, but your illustrious father's, that I

foresee, in this visit of the bastard Anthony, the most signal disgrace to Warwick that ever king passed upon ambassador or gentleman. And this moves me more! —yea, I vow to St. George, my patron, it moves me more—by the thought of danger to your royal house, than by the grief of slight to mine; for Warwick—but you know him."

"Montagu, you must soothe and calm your brother if chafed. I impose that task on your love for us. Alack, would that Edward listened more to me and less to the queen's kith:—These Woodvilles!—and yet they may live to move not wrath but pity. If aught snapped the thread of Edward's life (Holy Paul forbid!), what would chance to Elizabeth—her brothers—her children?"

"Her children would mount the throne that our right hands built," said Montagu, sullenly.

"Ah! think you so?—you rejoice me! I had feared that the barons might, that the commons would, that the church *must,* pronounce the unhappy truth, that—but you look amazed, my lord! Alas, my boyish years are too garrulous!"

"I catch not your highness's meaning."

"Pooh, pooh! By St. Paul, your seeming dulness proves your loyalty; but, with me, the king's brother, frankness were safe. Thou knowest well that the king was betrothed before to the Lady Eleanor Talbot; that such betrothal, not set aside by the pope, renders his marriage with Elizabeth against law; that his children may (would to Heaven it were not so!) be set aside as bastards, when Edward's life no longer shields them from the sharp eyes of men."

"Ah!" said Montagu, thoughtfully; "and in that case, George of Clarence would wear the crown, and his children reign in England."

"Our Lord forefend," said Richard, "that I should say that Warwick thought of this when he deemed George worthy of the hand of Isabel. Nay, it could not be so; for, however clear the claim, strong and powerful would be those who would resist it, and Clarence is not, as you will see, the man who can wrestle boldly—even for a throne. Moreover, he is too addicted to wine and pleasure to bid fair to outlive the king."

Montagu fixed his penetrating eyes on Richard, but dropped them, abashed, before that steady, deep, unrevealing gaze, which seemed to pierce into other hearts, and show nothing of the heart within.

"Happy Clarence!" resumed the prince, with a heavy sigh, and after a brief pause—"a Nevile's husband and a Warwick's son!—what can the saints do more for men? You must excuse his errors—all our errors—to your brother. You may not know, peradventure, sweet Montagu, how deep an interest I have in maintaining all amity between Lord Warwick and the king. For methinks there is one face fairer than fair Isabel's, and one man more to be envied than even Clarence. Fairest face to me in the wide world is the Lady Anne's—happiest man between the cradle and the grave, is he whom the Lady Anne shall call her lord! and if I—oh, look you, Montagu, let there be no breach between Warwick and the king! Fare-you-well, dear lord and cousin—I go to Baynard's Castle till these feasts are over."

"Does not your grace," said Montagu, recovering from the surprise into which one part of Gloucester's address had thrown him—"does not your grace—so skilled in lance and horsemanship—preside at the lists?"

"Montagu, I love your brother well enough to dis-

please my king. The great earl shall not say, at least, that Richard Plantagenet, in his absence, forgot the reverence due to loyalty and merit. Tell him that; and if I seem (unlike Clarence) to forbear to confront the queen and her kindred, it is because youth should make no enemies—not the less for that, should princes forget no friends."

Richard said this with a tone of deep feeling, and, folding his arms within his furred surcoat, walked slowly on to a small postern admitting to the river; but there, pausing by a buttress which concealed him till Montagu had left the yard, instead of descending to his barge, he turned back into the royal garden. Here several of the court of both sexes were assembled, conferring on the event of the day. Richard halted at a distance, and contemplated their gay dresses and animated countenances with something between melancholy and scorn upon his young brow. One of the most remarkable social characteristics of the middle ages is the prematurity at which the great arrived at manhood, shared in its passions, and indulged its ambitions. Among the numerous instances in our own and other countries that might be selected from history, few are more striking than that of this Duke of Gloucester—great in camp and in council, at an age when now-a-days a youth is scarcely trusted to the discipline of a college. The whole of his portentous career was closed, indeed, before the public life of modern ambition usually commences. Little could those accustomed to see, on our stage, "the elderly ruffian" * our actors represent, imagine that at the opening of Shakespeare's play of "Richard the Third," the hero was but in his nineteenth year; but at the still more

* Sharon Turner.

juvenile age in which he appears in this our record, Richard of Gloucester was older in intellect, and almost in experience, than many a wise man at the date of thirty-three—the fatal age when his sun set for ever on the field of Bosworth!

The young prince, then, eyed the gaudy, fluttering, babbling assemblage before him with mingled melancholy and scorn. Not that he felt, with the acuteness which belongs to modern sentiment, his bodily defects amidst that circle of the stately and the fair, for they were not of a nature to weaken his arm in war or lessen his persuasive influences in peace. But it was rather that sadness which so often comes over an active and ambitious intellect in early youth, when it pauses to ask, in sorrow and disdain, what its plots and counterplots, its restlessness and strife, are really worth. The scene before him was of pleasure—but in pleasure, neither the youth nor the manhood of Richard III. was ever pleased; though not absolutely of the rigid austerity of Amadis, or our Saxon Edward, he was comparatively free from the licentiousness of his times. His passions were too large for frivolous excitements. Already the Italian, or, as it is falsely called, the Machiavelian policy, was pervading the intellect of Europe, and the effects of its ruthless, grand, and deliberate statecraft are visible from the accession of Edward IV. till the close of Elizabeth's reign. With this policy, which reconciled itself to crime as a necessity of wisdom, was often blended a refinement of character which disdained vulgar vices. Not skilled alone in those knightly accomplishments which induced Caxton, with propriety, to dedicate to Richard "The Book of the Order of Chivalry," the Duke of Gloucester's more peaceful amusements were borrowed from se-

verer Graces than those which presided over the tastes of his royal brothers. He loved, even to passion, the Arts, Music—especially of the more Doric and warlike kind—Painting, and Architecture; he was a reader of books, as of men—the books that become princes—and hence that superior knowledge of the principles of law and of commerce, which his brief reign evinced. More like an Italian in all things than the careless Norman or the simple Saxon, Machiavel might have made of his character a companion, though a contrast, to that of Castruccio Castrucani.

The crowd murmured and rustled at the distance, and still, with folded arms, Richard gazed aloof, when a lady, entering the garden from the palace, passed by him so hastily, that she brushed his surcoat, and, turning round in surprise, made a low reverence, as she exclaimed—"Prince Richard! and alone amidst so many!"

"Lady," said the duke, "it was a sudden hope that brought me into this garden—and that was the hope to see your fair face shining above the rest."

"Your highness jests," returned the lady, though her superb countenance and haughty carriage evinced no opinion of herself so humble as her words would imply.

"My lady of Bonville," said the young duke, laying his hand on her arm, "mirth is not in my thoughts at this hour."

"I believe your highness; for the Lord Richard Plantagenet is not one of the Woodvilles. The mirth is theirs to-day."

"Let who will have mirth—it is the breath of a moment. Mirth cannot tarnish glory—the mirror in which the gods are glassed."

"I understand you, my lord," said the proud lady;

and her face, before stern and high, brightened into so lovely a change, so soft and winning a smile, that Gloucester no longer marvelled that that smile had rained so large an influence on the fate and heart of his favourite Hastings. The beauty of this noble woman was indeed remarkable in its degree, and peculiar in its character. She bore a stronger likeness in feature to the archbishop, than to either of her other brothers; for the prelate had the straight and smooth outline of the Greeks—not, like Montagu and Warwick, the lordlier and manlier aquiline of the Norman race,—and his complexion was feminine in its pale clearness. But though in this resembling the subtlest of the brethren, the fair sister shared with Warwick an expression, if haughty, singularly frank and candid in its imperious majesty; she had the same splendid and steady brilliancy of eye—the same quick quiver of the lip, speaking of nervous susceptibility and haste of mood. The hateful fashion of that day, which pervaded all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, was the prodigal use of paints and cosmetics, and all imaginable artificial adjuncts of a spurious beauty. This extended often even to the men, and the sturdiest warrior deemed it no shame to recur to such arts of the toilet as the vainest wanton in our day would never venture to acknowledge. But the Lady Bonville, proudly confident of her beauty, and possessing a purity of mind that revolted from the littleness of courting admiration, contrasted forcibly in this the ladies of the court. Her cheek was of a marble whiteness, though occasionally a rising flush through the clear, rich, transparent skin, showed that in earlier youth the virgin bloom had not been absent from the surface. There was in her features, when they reposed, somewhat of the trace of suf-

fering,—of a struggle, past it may be, but still remembered. But when she spoke, those features lighted up and undulated in such various and kindling life as to dazzle, to bewitch, or to awe the beholder, according as the impulse moulded the expression. Her dress suited her lofty and spotless character. Henry VI. might have contemplated, with holy pleasure, its matronly decorum; the jewelled gorget ascended to the rounded and dimpled chin; the arms were bare only at the wrists, where the blue veins were seen through a skin of snow; the dark glossy locks, which her tirewoman boasted, when released, swept the ground, were gathered into a modest and simple braid, surmounted by the beseeming coronet that proclaimed her rank. The Lady Bonville might have stood by the side of Cornelia, the model of a young and highborn matron, in whose virtue the honour of man might securely dwell.

"I understand you, my lord," she said, with her bright, thankful smile; "and as Lord Warwick's sister, I am grateful."

"Your love for the great earl proves you are noble enough to forgive," said Richard, meaningly. "Nay, chide me not with that lofty look; you know that there are no secrets between Hastings and Gloucester."

"My lord duke, the head of a noble house hath the right to dispose of the hands of the daughters; I know nothing in Lord Warwick to forgive."

But she turned her head as she spoke, and a tear for a moment trembled in that haughty eye.

"Lady," said Richard, moved to admiration, "to you let me confide my secret. I would be your nephew. Boy though I be in years, my heart beats as loudly as a man's: and that heart beats for Anne."

"The love of Richard Plantagenet honours even Warwick's daughter!"

"Think you so. Then stand my friend; and, being thus my friend, intercede with Warwick, if he angers at the silly holiday of this Woodville pageant."

"Alas, sir! you know that Warwick listens to no interceders between himself and his passions. But what then? Grant him wronged, aggrieved, trifled with,—what then? Can he injure the house of York?"

Richard looked in some surprise at the fair speaker.

"Can he injure the house of York?—Marry, yes," he replied, bluntly.

"But for what end? Whom else should be put upon the throne?"

"What if he forgive the Lancastrians? What if——"

"Utter not the thought, prince, breathe it not," exclaimed the Lady Bonville, almost fiercely. "I love and honour my brave brother, despite—despite——" She paused a moment, blushed, and proceeded rapidly, without concluding the sentence. "I love him as a woman of his house must love the hero who forms its proudest boast. But if, for any personal grudge, any low ambition, any rash humour, the son of my father, Salisbury, could forget that Margaret of Anjou placed the gory head of that old man upon the gates of York, could by word or deed abet the cause of usurping and bloody Lancaster,—I would—I would;—Out upon my sex! I *could* do nought but weep the glory of Nevile and Monthermer gone for ever."

Before Richard could reply, the sound of musical instruments, and a procession of heralds and pages proceeding from the palace, announced the approach of Edward. He caught the hand of the dame of Bonville, lifted it to his lips, and saying, "May fortune one day permit me to face as the earl's son the earl's foes,"

made his graceful reverence, glided from the garden, gained his barge, and was rowed to the huge pile of Baynard's Castle, lately reconstructed, but in a gloomy and barbaric taste, and in which, at that time, he principally resided with his mother, the once peerless Rose of Raby.

The Lady of Bonville paused a moment, and in that pause her countenance recovered its composure. She then passed on, with a stately step, towards a group of the ladies of the court, and her eye noted with proud pleasure that the highest names of the English knighthood and nobility, comprising the numerous connections of her family, formed a sullen circle apart from the rest, betokening, by their grave countenances and moody whispers, how sensitively they felt the slight to Lord Warwick's embassy in the visit of the Count de la Roche, and how little they were disposed to cringe to the rising sun of the Woodvilles. There, collected into a puissance whose discontent had sufficed to shake a firmer throne (the young Raoul de Fulke, the idolater of Warwick, the personation in himself of the old Norman seignorie, in their centre), with folded arms and lowering brows, stood the earl's kinsmen, the Lords Fitzhugh and Fauconberg: with them, Thomas Lord Stanley, a prudent noble, who rarely sided with a malcontent, and the Lord St. John, and the heir of the ancient Bergavennies, and many another chief, under whose banner marched an army! Richard of Gloucester had shown his wit in refusing to mingle in intrigues which provoked the ire of that martial phalanx. As the Lady of Bonville swept by these gentlemen, their murmur of respectful homage, their profound salutation, and unbonneted heads, contrasted forcibly with the slight and grave, if not scornful, obeisance they had

just rendered to one of the queen's sisters, who had passed a moment before in the same direction. The lady still moved on, and came suddenly across the path of Hastings, as, in his robes of state, he issued from the palace. Their eyes met, and both changed colour.

"So, my lord chamberlain," said the dame, sarcastically, "the Count de la Roche is, I hear, consigned to your especial charge."

"A charge the chamberlain cannot refuse, and which William Hastings does not covet."

"A king had never asked Montagu and Warwick to consider amongst their duties any charge they had deemed dishonouring."

"Dishonouring, Lady Bonville!" exclaimed Hastings, with a bent brow and a flushed cheek,—"neither Montagu nor Warwick had, with safety, applied to me the word that has just passed your lips."

"I crave your pardon," answered Katherine, bitterly. "Mine articles of faith in men's honour are obsolete or heretical. I had deemed it dishonouring in a noble nature to countenance insult to a noble enemy in his absence. I had deemed it dishonouring in a brave soldier, a well-born gentleman (now from his valiantness, merit, and wisdom, become a puissant and dreaded lord), to sink into that lackeydom and varletaille which falsehood and cringing have stablished in these walls, and baptised under the name of 'courtiers.' Better had Katherine de Bonville esteemed Lord Hastings had he rather fallen under a king's displeasure than debased his better self to a Woodville's dastard schemings."

"Lady, you are cruel and unjust, like all your haughty race. And idle were reply to one who, of all persons, should have judged me better. For the rest, if this mummery humbles Lord Warwick, gramercy!

there is nothing in my memory that should make my share in it a gall to my conscience; nor do I owe the Neviles so large a gratitude, that rather than fret the pile of their pride, I should throw down the scaffolding on which my fearless step hath clombe to as fair a height, and one perhaps that may overlook as long a posterity, as the best baron that ever quartered the Raven Eagle and the Dun Bull. But (resumed Hastings, with a withering sarcasm) doubtless the Lady de Bonville more admires the happy lord who holds himself, by right of pedigree, superior to all things that make the statesman wise, the scholar learned, and the soldier famous. Way there—back, gentles,"—and Hastings turned to the crowd behind,—"Way there, for my lord of Harrington and Bonville!"

The bystanders smiled at each other as they obeyed; and a heavy, shambling, graceless man, dressed in the most exaggerated fopperies of the day, but with a face which even sickliness, that refines most faces, could not divest of the most vacant dulness, and a mien and gait to which no attire could give dignity, passed through the group, bowing awkwardly to the right and left, and saying, in a thick, husky voice—"You are too good, sirs—too good: I must not presume so overmuch on my seignorie. The king would keep me—he would indeed, sirs; um—um—why Katherine—dame—thy stiff gorget makes me ashamed of thee. Thou wouldst not think, Lord Hastings, that Katherine had a white skin—a parlous white skin. La, you now—fie on these mufflers!"

The courtiers sneered; Hastings, with a look of malignant and pitiless triumph, eyed the Lady of Bonville. For a moment the colour went and came across her transparent cheek, but the confusion passed, and

returning the insulting gaze of her ancient lover with an eye of unspeakable majesty, she placed her arm upon her lord's, and saying calmly:—"An English matron cares but to be fair in her husband's eyes,"—drew him away; and the words and the manner of the lady were so dignified and simple, that the courtiers hushed their laughter, and for the moment the lord of such a woman was not only envied but respected.

While this scene had passed, the procession, preceding Edward, had filed into the garden in long and stately order. From another entrance, Elizabeth, the Princess Margaret, and the Duchess of Bedford, with their trains, had already issued, and were now ranged upon a flight of marble steps, backed by a columned alcove, hung with velvets striped into the royal baudekin, while the stairs themselves were covered with leathern carpets, powdered with the white rose and the fleur de lis; either side lined by the bearers of the many banners of Edward, displaying the white lion of March, the black bull of Clare, the cross of Jerusalem, the dragon of Arragon, and the rising sun, which he had assumed as his peculiar war-badge since the battle of Mortimer's Cross. Again, and louder, came the flourish of music; and a murmur through the crowd, succeeded by deep silence, announced the entrance of the king. He appeared, leading by the hand the Count de la Roche, and followed by the Lords Scales, Rivers, Dorset, and the Duke of Clarence. All eyes were bent upon the count, and though seen to disadvantage by the side of the comeliest and stateliest, and most gorgeously-attired prince in Christendom, his high forehead, bright sagacious eye, and powerful frame, did not disappoint the expectations founded upon the fame of one equally subtle in council and redoubted in war.

The royal host and the princely guest made their way, where Elizabeth, blazing in jewels and cloth of gold, shone royally, begirt by the ladies of her brilliant court. At her right hand stood her mother, at her left, the Princess Margaret.

"I present to you, my Elizabeth," said Edward, "a princely gentleman, to whom we nevertheless wish all ill-fortune,—for we cannot desire that he may subdue our knights, and we would fain hope that he may be conquered by our ladies."

"The last hope is already fulfilled," said the count, gallantly, as on his knee he kissed the fair hand extended to him. Then rising, and gazing full and even boldly upon the young Princess Margaret, he added — "I have seen too often the picture of the Lady Margaret not to be aware that I stand in that illustrious presence."

"Her picture! Sir Count," said the queen; "we knew not that it had been ever limned."

"Pardon me, it was done by stealth."

"And where have you seen it?"

"Worn at the heart of my brother the Count of Charolois!" answered De la Roche, in a whispered tone.

Margaret blushed with evident pride and delight; and the wily envoy, leaving the impression his words had made to take their due effect, addressed himself, with all the gay vivacity he possessed, to the fair queen and her haughty mother.

After a brief time spent in this complimentary converse, the count then adjourned to inspect the menagerie, of which the king was very proud. Edward offering his hand to his queen, led the way, and the Duchess of Bedford, directing the count to Margaret by a shrewd and silent glance of her eye, so far smothered

her dislike to Clarence as to ask his highness to attend herself.

"Ah! lady," whispered the count, as the procession moved along, "what thrones would not Charolois resign for the hand that his unworthy envoy is allowed to touch!"

"Sir," said Margaret, demurely looking down, "the Count of Charolois is a lord, who, if report be true, makes war his only mistress."

"Because the only living mistress his great heart could serve is denied to his love! Ah, poor lord and brother, what new reasons for eternal war to Burgundy, when France, not only his foe, becomes his rival!"

Margaret sighed, and the count continued, till by degrees he warmed the royal maiden from her reserve; and his eye grew brighter, and a triumphant smile played about his lips, when, after the visit to the menagerie, the procession re-entered the palace, and the Lord Hastings conducted the count to the bath prepared for him, previous to the crowning banquet of the night. And far more luxurious and more splendid than might be deemed by those who read but the general histories of that sanguinary time, or the inventories of furniture in the houses even of the great barons, was the accommodation which Edward afforded to his guest. His apartments and chambers were hung with white silk and linen, the floors covered with richly-woven carpets; the counterpane of his bed was cloth of gold, trimmed with ermine: the cupboard shone with vessels of silver and gold; and over two baths were pitched tents of white cloth of Rennes, fringed with silver.*

* See Madden's Narrative of the Lord Grauthuse: "Archæologia," 1830.

Agreeably to the manners of the time, Lord Hastings assisted to disrobe the count; and, the more to bear him company, afterwards undressed himself and bathed in the one bath, while the count refreshed his limbs in the other.

"Pri'thee," said De la Roche, drawing aside the curtain of his tent, and putting forth his head—"pri'thee, my Lord Hastings, deign to instruct my ignorance of a court which I would fain know well, and let me weet, whether the splendour of your king, far exceeding what I was taught to look for, is derived from his revenue, as sovereign of England, or chief of the House of York?"

"Sir," returned Hastings, gravely, putting out his own head—"it is Edward's happy fortune to be the wealthiest proprietor in England, except the Earl of Warwick, and thus he is enabled to indulge in a state which yet oppresses not his people."

"Except the Earl of Warwick," repeated the count, musingly, as the fumes of the odours, with which the bath was filled, rose in a cloud over his long hair—"ill would fare that subject, in most lands, who was as wealthy as his king! You have heard that Warwick has met King Louis at Rouen, and that they are inseparable?"

"It becomes an ambassador to win grace of him he is sent to please."

"But none win grace of Louis whom Louis does not dupe."

"You know not Lord Warwick, Sir Count. His mind is so strong and so frank, that it is as hard to deceive him, as it is for him to be deceived."

"Time will show," said the count, pettishly, and he withdrew his head into the tent.

And now there appeared the attendants, with hippocras, syrups, and comfits, by way of giving appetite for the supper, so that no farther opportunity for private conversation was left to the two lords. While the count was dressing, the Lord Scales entered with a superb gown, clasped with jewels, and lined with minever, with which Edward had commissioned him to present the Bastard. In this robe, the Lord Scales insisted upon enduing his antagonist with his own hands, and the three knights then repaired to the banquet. At the king's table no male personage out of the royal family sat, except Lord Rivers—as Elizabeth's father—and the Count de la Roche, placed between Margaret and the Duchess of Bedford.

At another table, the great peers of the realm feasted under the presidence of Anthony Woodville, while, entirely filling one side of the hall, the ladies of the court held their "mess" (so called), apart, and "great and mighty was the eating thereof!"

The banquet ended, the dance began. The admirable "featliness" of the Count de la Roche, in the pavon, with the Lady Margaret, was rivalled only by the more majestic grace of Edward and the dainty steps of Anthony Woodville. But the lightest and happiest heart which beat in that revel was one in which no scheme and no ambition but those of love nursed the hope and dreamed the triumph.

Stung by the coldness, even more than by the disdain of the Lady Bonville, and enraged to find that no taunt of his own, however galling, could ruffle a dignity which was an insult both to memory and to self-love, Hastings had exerted more than usual, both at the banquet and in the revel, those general powers of pleasing, which, even in an age when personal quali-

fications ranked so high, had yet made him no less renowned for successes in gallantry than the beautiful and youthful king. All about this man witnessed to the triumph of mind over the obstacles that beset it;—his rise without envy, his safety amidst foes, the happy ease with which he moved through the snares and pits of everlasting stratagem and universal wile! Him alone the arts of the Woodvilles could not supplant in Edward's confidence and love; to him alone dark Gloucester bent his haughty soul: him alone, Warwick, who had rejected his alliance, and knew the private grudge the rejection bequeathed;—him alone, among the "new men," Warwick always treated with generous respect, as a wise patriot, and a fearless soldier; and in the more frivolous scenes of courtly life, the same mind raised one no longer in the bloom of youth, with no striking advantages of person, and studiously disdainful of all the fopperies of the time, to an equality with the youngest, the fairest, the gaudiest courtier, in that rivalship, which has pleasure for its object and love for its reward. Many a heart beat quicker as the graceful courtier, with that careless wit which veiled his profound mournfulness of character, or with that delicate flattery which his very contempt for human nature had taught him, moved from dame to donzell;—till at length, in the sight and hearing of the Lady Bonville, as she sat, seemingly heedless of his revenge, amidst a group of matrons elder than herself, a murmur of admiration made him turn quickly, and his eye following the gaze of the bystanders, rested upon the sweet, animated face of Sibyll, flushed into rich bloom at the notice it excited. Then as he approached the maiden, his quick glance darting to the woman he had first loved, told him that he had at last

discovered the secret how to wound. An involuntary compression of Katherine's proud lips, a hasty rise and fall of the stately neck, a restless indescribable flutter, as it were, of the whole frame, told the experienced woman-reader of the signs of jealousy and fear. And he passed at once to the young maiden's side. Alas! what wonder that Sibyll that night surrendered her heart to the happiest dreams; and finding herself on the floors of a court—intoxicated by its perfumed air,—hearing on all sides the murmured eulogies which approved and justified the seeming preference of the powerful noble,—what wonder that she thought the humble maiden, with her dower of radiant youth and exquisite beauty, and the fresh and countless treasures of virgin love, might be no unworthy mate of the "new lord."

It was morning * before the revel ended; and when, dismissed by the Duchess of Bedford, Sibyll was left to herself, not even amidst her happy visions did the daughter forget her office. She stole into her father's chamber. He, too, was astir and up—at work at the untiring furnace, the damps on his brow, but all Hope's vigour at his heart. So while Pleasure feasts, and Youth revels, and Love deludes itself, and Ambition chases its shadows—(chased itself by Death)—so works the world-changing and world-despised SCIENCE, the life within life, for all living,—and to all dead!

* The hours of our ancestors, on great occasions, were not always more seasonable than our own. Froissart speaks of Court Balls, in the reign of Richard II., kept up till day.

CHAPTER VII

THE RENOWNED COMBAT BETWEEN SIR ANTHONY WOODVILLE AND THE BASTARD OF BURGUNDY

And now the day came for the memorable joust between the queen's brother and the Count de la Roche. By a chapter solemnly convoked at St. Paul's, the preliminaries were settled;—upon the very timber used in decking the lists, King Edward expended half the yearly revenue derived from all the forests of his duchy of York. In the wide space of Smithfield, destined at a later day to blaze with the fires of intolerant bigotry, crowded London's holiday population: and yet, though all the form and parade of chivalry were there—though, in the open balconies, never presided a braver king or a comelier queen—though never a more accomplished chevalier than Sir Anthony Lord of Scales, nor a more redoubted knight than the brother of Charles the Bold, met lance to lance,—it was obvious to the elder and more observant spectators, that the true spirit of the lists was already fast wearing out from the influences of the age; that the *gentleman* was succeeding to the *knight,* that a more silken and scheming race had become the heirs of the iron men, who, under Edward III., had realized the fabled Paladins of Charlemagne and Arthur. But the actors were less changed than the spectators,—the Well-born than the People. Instead of that hearty sympathy in the contest, that awful respect for the champions, that eager anxiety for the honour of the national lance, which, a century or more ago, would have moved the throng as one breast, the comments of the bystanders

evinced rather the cynicism of ridicule, the feeling that the contest was unreal, and that chivalry was out of place in the practical temper of the times. On the great chess-board, the pawns were now so marshalled, that the knights' moves were no longer able to scour the board and hold in check both castle and king.

"Gramercy," said Master Stokton, who sat in high state as sheriff,* "this is a sad waste of moneys: and where, after all, is the glory in two tall fellows, walled a yard thick in armour, poking at each other with poles of painted wood?"

"Give me a good bull-bait!" said a sturdy butcher, in the crowd below—"that's more English, I take it, than these fooleries."

Amongst the ring, the bold 'prentices of London, up and away betimes, had pushed their path into a foremost place, much to the discontent of the gentry, and with their flat caps, long hair, thick bludgeons, loud exclamations, and turbulent demeanour, greatly scandalized the formal heralds. That, too, was a sign of the times. Nor less did it show the growth of commerce, that, on seats very little below the regal balconies, and far more conspicuous than the places of earls and barons, sat in state the mayor (that mayor a grocer!†) and aldermen of the city.

A murmur, rising gradually into a general shout, evinced the admiration into which the spectators were surprised, when Anthony Woodville Lord Scales—his head bare—appeared at the entrance of the lists—so bold and so fair was his countenance, so radiant his armour, and so richly caparisoned his grey steed, in the gorgeous housings that almost swept the ground; and around him grouped such an attendance of knights

* Fabyan. † Sir John Yonge—Fabyan.

and peers as seldom graced the train of any subject, with the Duke of Clarence at his right hand, bearing his bassinet.

But Anthony's pages, supporting his banner, shared at least the popular admiration with their gallant lord: they were, according to the old custom, which probably fell into disuse under the Tudors, disguised in imitation of the heraldic beasts that typified his armorial cognizance:‡ and horrible and laidly looked they in the guise of griffins, with artful scales of thin steel painted green, red forked tongues, and griping the banner in one huge claw, while, much to the marvel of the bystanders, they contrived to walk very statelily on the other. "Oh, the brave monsters!" exclaimed the butcher, "Cogs bones, this beats all the rest!"

But when the trumpets of the heralds had ceased, when the words "*Laissez aller!*" were pronounced, when the lances were set and the charge began, this momentary admiration was converted into a cry of derision, by the sudden restiveness of the Burgundian's horse. This animal, of the pure race of Flanders, of a bulk approaching to clumsiness, of a rich bay, where, indeed, amidst the barding and the housings, its colour could be discerned, had borne the valiant Bastard through many a sanguine field, and in the last had received a wound which had greatly impaired its sight. And now, whether scared by the shouting, or terrified by its obscure vision, and the recollection of its wound when last bestrode by its lord, it halted midway, reared on end, and, fairly turning round, despite spur and bit, carried back the Bastard, swearing strange oaths, that grumbled hoarsely through his vizor, to the very place whence he had started.

‡ Hence the origin of *Supporters.*

The uncourteous mob yelled and shouted and laughed, and wholly disregarding the lifted wands, and drowning the solemn rebukes, of the heralds, they heaped upon the furious Burgundian all the expressions of ridicule in which the wit of Cockaigne is so immemorially rich. But the courteous Anthony of England, seeing the strange and involuntary flight of his redoubted foe, incontinently reined in, lowered his lance, and made his horse, without turning round, back to the end of the lists in a series of graceful gambadas and caracols. Again the signal was given, and this time the gallant bay did not fail his rider;—ashamed, doubtless, of its late misdemeanour,—arching its head till it almost touched the breast, laying its ears level on the neck, and with a snort of anger and disdain, the steed of Flanders rushed to the encounter. The Bastard's lance shivered fairly against the small shield of the Englishman, but the Woodville's weapon, more deftly aimed, struck full on the count's bassinet, and at the same time the pike projecting from the grey charger's chaffron pierced the nostrils of the unhappy bay, whom rage and shame had blinded more than ever. The noble animal, stung by the unexpected pain, and bitted sharply by the rider whose seat was sorely shaken by the stroke on his helmet, reared again, stood an instant perfectly erect, and then fell backwards, rolling over and over the illustrious burden it had borne. Then the debonnaire Sir Anthony of England, casting down his lance, drew his sword, and dexterously caused his destrier to curvet in a close circle round the fallen Bastard, courteously shaking at him the brandished weapon, but without attempt to strike.

"Ho, marshal!" cried King Edward, "assist to his legs the brave count."

The marshal hastened to obey. "*Ventrebleu!*" quoth the Bastard, when extricated from the weight of his steed, "I cannot hold by the clouds, but though my horse failed me, surely I will not fail my companions"—and as he spoke, he placed himself in so gallant and superb a posture, that he silenced the inhospitable yell which had rejoiced in the foreigner's discomfiture. Then, observing that the gentle Anthony had dismounted, and was leaning gracefully against his destrier, the Burgundian called forth—

"Sir Knight, thou has conquered the steed, not the rider. We are now foot to foot. The pole-axe, or the sword—which? Speak!"

"I pray thee, noble sieur," quoth the Woodville, mildly, "to let the strife close for this day, and when rest hath——"

"Talk of rest to striplings—I demand my rights!"

"Heaven forefend," said Anthony Woodville, lifting his hand on high, "that I, favoured so highly by the fair dames of England, should demand repose on their behalf. But bear witness—" he said (with the generosity of the last true chevalier of his age, and lifting his vizor, so as to be heard by the king, and even through the foremost ranks of the crowd)—"bear witness, that in this encounter, my cause hath befriended me, not mine arm. The Count de la Roche speaketh truly; and his steed alone be blamed for his mischance."

"It is but a blind beast!" muttered the Burgundian.

"And," added Anthony, bowing towards the tiers rich with the beauty of the court—"and the count himself assureth me that the blaze of yonder eyes blinded his goodly steed." Having delivered himself of this gallant conceit, so much in accordance with the

taste of the day, the Englishman, approaching the king's balcony, craved permission to finish the encounter with the axe or brand.

"The former, rather, please you, my liege; for the warriors of Burgundy have ever been deemed unconquered in that martial weapon."

Edward, whose brave blood was up and warm at the clash of steel, bowed his gracious assent, and two pole-axes were brought into the ring.

The crowd now evinced a more earnest and respectful attention than they had hitherto shown, for the pole-axe, in such stalwart hands, was no child's toy. "Hum," quoth Master Stokton, "there may be some merriment now—not like those silly poles! Your axe lops off a limb mighty cleanly."

The knights themselves seemed aware of the greater gravity of the present encounter. Each looked well to the bracing of his vizor;—and poising their weapons with method and care, they stood apart some moments, eyeing each other steadfastly,—as adroit fencers with the small sword do in our schools at this day.

At length, the Burgundian, darting forward, launched a mighty stroke at the Lord Scales, which, though rapidly parried, broke down the guard, and descended with such weight on the shoulder, that but for the thrice-proven steel of Milan, the benevolent expectation of Master Stokton had been happily fulfilled. Even as it was, the Lord Scales uttered a slight cry—which might be either of anger or of pain—and lifting his axe with both hands, levelled a blow on the Burgundian's helmet that well nigh brought him to his knee. And now, for the space of some ten minutes, the crowd, with charmed suspense, beheld the almost breathless rapidity with which stroke on stroke was

given and parried; the axe shifted to and fro—wielded now with both hands—now the left, now the right—and the combat reeling, as it were, to and fro—so that one moment it raged at one extreme of the lists—the next at the other; and so well inured, from their very infancy, to the weight of mail were these redoubted champions, that the very wrestlers on the village green, nay, the naked gladiators of old, might have envied their lithe agility and supple quickness.

At last, by a most dexterous stroke, Anthony Woodville forced the point of his axe into the vizor of the Burgundian, and there so firmly did it stick, that he was enabled to pull his antagonist to and fro at his will, while the Bastard, rendered as blind as his horse by the stoppage of the eye-hole, dealt his own blows about at random, and was placed completely at the mercy of the Englishman. And gracious as the gentle Sir Anthony was, he was still so smarting under many a bruise felt through his dinted mail, that small mercy, perchance, would the Bastard have found, for the gripe of the Woodville's left hand was on his foe's throat, and the right seemed about to force the point deliberately forward into the brain, when Edward, roused from his delight at that pleasing spectacle by a loud shriek from his sister Margaret, echoed by the Duchess of Bedford, who was by no means anxious that her son's axe should be laid at the root of all her schemes, rose, and crying, "Hold!" with that loud voice which had so often thrilled a mightier field, cast down his warderer.

Instantly the lists opened—the marshals advanced—severed the champions—and unbraced the count's helmet. But the Bastard's martial spirit, exceedingly dissatisfied at the unfriendly interruption, rewarded

the attention of the marshals by an oath, worthy his relationship to Charles the Bold: and hurrying straight to the king, his face flushed with wrath and his eyes sparkling with fire—

"Noble sire and king," he cried, "do me not this wrong! I am not overthrown, nor scathed, nor subdued—I yield not. By every knightly law, till one champion yields, he can call upon the other to lay on and do his worst."

Edward paused, much perplexed and surprised at finding his intercession so displeasing. He glanced first at the Lord Rivers, who sat a little below him, and whose cheek grew pale at the prospect of his son's renewed encounter with one so determined—then at the immovable aspect of the gentle and apathetic Elizabeth—then at the agitated countenance of the duchess—then at the imploring eyes of Margaret, who, with an effort, preserved herself from swooning; and, finally, beckoning to him the Duke of Clarence, as high constable, and the Duke of Norfolk, as earl marshal, he said, "Tarry a moment, Sir Count, till we take counsel in this grave affair." The count bowed sullenly—the spectators maintained an anxious silence—the curtain before the king's gallery was closed while the council conferred. At the end of some three minutes, however, the drapery was drawn aside by the Duke of Norfolk, and Edward, fixing his bright blue eye upon the fiery Burgundian, said, gravely, "Count de la Roche, your demand is just. According to the laws of the list, you may fairly claim that the encounter go on."

"Oh! knightly prince, well said. My thanks. We lose time—squires, my bassinet!"

"Yea," renewed Edward, "bring hither the count's

bassinet. By the laws, the combat may go on at thine asking—I retract my warderer. But, Count de la Roche, by those laws you appeal to, the said combat must go on precisely at the point at which it was broken off. Wherefore brace on thy bassinet, Count de la Roche,—and thou, Anthony Lord Scales, fix the pike of thine axe, which I now perceive was inserted exactly where the right eye giveth easy access to the brain, precisely in the same place. So renew the contest, and the Lord have mercy on thy soul, Count de la Roche!"

At this startling sentence, wholly unexpected, and yet wholly according to those laws of which Edward was so learned a judge, the Bastard's visage fell. With open mouth and astounded eyes, he stood gazing at the king, who, majestically reseating himself, motioned to the heralds.

"Is that the law, sire?" at length faltered forth the Bastard.

"Can you dispute it? Can any knight or gentleman gainsay it?"

"Then," quoth the Bastard, gruffly, and throwing his axe to the ground, "by all the saints in the calendar! I have had enough. I came hither to dare all that beseems a chevalier, but to stand still while Sir Anthony Woodville deliberately pokes out my right eye, were a feat to show that very few brains would follow. And so, my Lord Scales, I give thee my right hand, and wish thee joy of thy triumph, and the golden collar." *

"No triumph," replied the Woodville, modestly, "for thou art only, as brave knights should be, sub-

* The prize was a collar of gold, enamelled with the flower of the souvenance.

dued by the charms of the ladies, which no breast, however valiant, can with impunity dispute."

So saying, the Lord Scales led the count to a seat of honor near the Lord Rivers. And the actor was contented, perforce, to become a spectator of the ensuing contests. These were carried on till late at noon between the Burgundians and the English, the last maintaining the superiority of their principal champion; and among those in the *mêlée*, to which squires were admitted, not the least distinguished and conspicuous was our youthful friend, Master Marmaduke Nevile.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE BASTARD OF BURGUNDY PROSPERED MORE IN HIS POLICY THAN WITH THE POLE-AXE—AND HOW KING EDWARD HOLDS HIS SUMMER CHASE IN THE FAIR GROVES OF SHENE

It was some days after the celebrated encounter between the Bastard and Lord Scales, and the court had removed to the Palace of Shene. The Count de la Roche's favour with the Duchess of Bedford and the young princess had not rested upon his reputation for skill with the pole-axe, and it had now increased to a height that might well recompense the diplomatist for his discomfiture in the lists.

In the mean while, the arts of Warwick's enemies had been attended with signal success. The final preparations for the alliance, now virtually concluded with Louis's brother, still detained the earl at Rouen, and fresh accounts of the French king's intimacy with the ambassador were carefully forwarded to Rivers, and transmitted to Edward. Now, we have Edward's own

authority for stating that his first grudge against Warwick originated in this displeasing intimacy, but the English king was too clear-sighted to interpret such courtesies into the gloss given them by Rivers. He did not for a moment conceive that Lord Warwick was led into any absolute connection with Louis which could link him to the Lancastrians, for this was against common sense; but Edward, with all his good-humour, was implacable and vindictive, and he could not endure the thought that Warwick should gain the friendship of the man he deemed his foe. Putting aside his causes of hatred to Louis, in the encouragement which that king had formerly given to the Lancastrian exiles, Edward's pride as sovereign felt acutely the slighting disdain with which the French king had hitherto treated his royalty and his birth. The customary nickname with which he was maligned in Paris was "the Son of the Archer," a taunt upon the fair fame of his mother, whom scandal accused of no rigid fidelity to the Duke of York. Besides this, Edward felt somewhat of the jealousy natural to a king, himself so spirited and able, of the reputation for profound policy and statecraft, which Louis XI. was rapidly widening and increasing throughout the courts of Europe. And, what with the resentment, and what with the jealousy, there had sprung up in his warlike heart a secret desire to advance the claims of England to the throne of France, and retrieve the conquests won by the Fifth Henry, to be lost under the Sixth. Possessing these feelings and these views, Edward necessarily saw in the alliance with Burgundy, all that could gratify both his hate and his ambition. The Count of Charolois had sworn to Louis the most deadly enmity, and would have every motive, whether of vengeance or of interest, to

associate himself heart in hand with the arms of England in any invasion of France; and to these warlike objects Edward added, as we have so often had cause to remark, the more peaceful aims and interests of commerce. And, therefore, although he could not so far emancipate himself from that influence, which both awe and gratitude invested in the Earl of Warwick, as to resist his great minister's embassy to Louis; and though, despite all these reasons in favour of connection with Burgundy, he could not but reluctantly allow that Warwick urged those of a still larger and wiser policy, when showing that the infant dynasty of York could only be made secure by effectually depriving Margaret of the sole ally that could venture to assist her cause, yet no sooner had Warwick fairly departed, than he inly chafed at the concession he had made, and his mind was open to all the impressions which the Earl's enemies sought to stamp upon it. As the wisdom of every man, however able, can but run through those channels which are formed by the soil of the character, so Edward, with all his talents, never possessed the prudence which fear of consequences inspires. He was so eminently fearless—so scornful of danger—that he absolutely forgot the arguments on which the affectionate zeal of Warwick had based the alliance with Louis—arguments as to the unceasing peril, whether to his person or his throne, so long as the unprincipled and plotting genius of the French king had an interest against both—and thus he became only alive to the representations of his passions, his pride, and his mercantile interests. The Duchess of Bedford, the queen, and all the family of Woodville, who had but one object at heart—the downfall of Warwick and his house—knew enough of the earl's

haughty nature to be aware that he would throw up the reins of government the moment he knew that Edward has discredited and dishonoured his embassy; and, despite the suspicions they sought to instil into their king's mind, they calculated upon the earl's love and near relationship to Edward—upon his utter, and seemingly irreconcilable breach with the house of Lancaster—to render his wrath impotent—and to leave him only the fallen minister, not the mighty rebel.

Edward had been thus easily induced to permit the visit of the Count de la Roche, although he had by no means then resolved upon the course he should pursue. At all events, even if the alliance with Louis was to take place, the friendship of Burgundy was worth much to maintain. But De la Roche, soon made aware, by the Duchess of Bedford, of the ground on which he stood, and instructed by his brother to spare no pains and to scruple no promise that might serve to alienate Edward from Louis, and win the hand and dower of Margaret, found it a more facile matter than his most sanguine hopes had deemed, to work upon the passions and the motives which inclined the king to the pretensions of the heir of Burgundy. And what more than all else favoured the envoy's mission was the very circumstance that should most have defeated it—viz., the recollection of the Earl of Warwick. For in the absence of that powerful baron, and master-minister, the king had seemed to breathe more freely. In his absence, he forgot his power. The machine of government, to his own surprise, seemed to go on as well, the Commons were as submissive, the mobs as noisy in their shouts, as if the earl was by. There was no longer any one to share with Edward the joys of popularity, the sweets of

power. Though Edward was not Diogenes, he loved the popular sunshine, and no Alexander now stood between him and its beams. Deceived by the representations of his courtiers, hearing nothing but abuse of Warwick, and sneers at his greatness, he began to think the hour had come when he might reign alone, and he entered, though tacitly, and not acknowledging it even to himself, into the very object of the womankind about him—viz. the dismissal of his minister.

The natural carelessness and luxurious indolence of Edward's temper did not, however, permit him to see all the ingratitude of the course he was about to adopt. The egotism a king too often acquires, and no king so easily as one like Edward IV., not born to a throne, made him consider that he alone was entitled to the prerogatives of pride. As sovereign and as brother, might he not give the hand of Margaret as he listed? If Warwick was offended, pest on his disloyalty and presumption! And so saying to himself, he dismissed the very thought of the absent earl, and glided unconsciously down the current of the hour. And yet, notwithstanding all these prepossessions and dispositions, Edward might no doubt have deferred, at least, the meditated breach with his great minister until the return of the latter, and then have acted with the delicacy and precaution that became a king bound by ties of gratitude and blood to the statesman he desired to discard, but for a habit,—which, while history mentions, it seems to forget, in the consequences it ever engenders—the habit of intemperance. Unquestionably, to that habit many of the imprudences and levities of a king possessed of so much ability, are to be ascribed; and over his cups with the wary and watchful De la Roche, Edward had contrived to

entangle himself far more than in his cooler moments he would have been disposed to do.

Having thus admitted our readers into those recesses of that *cor inscrutabile*—the heart of kings—we summon them to a scene peculiar to the pastimes of the magnificent Edward. Amidst the shades of the vast park or chase which then appertained to the Palace of Shene, the noonday sun shone upon such a spot as Armida might have dressed for the subdued Rinaldo. A space had been cleared of trees and underwood, and made level as a bowling-green. Around this space the huge oak and the broad beech were hung with trellis-work, wreathed with jasmine, honeysuckle, and the white rose, trained in arches. Ever and anon through these arches extended long alleys, or vistas, gradually lost in the cool depth of foliage; amidst these alleys and around this space, numberless arbours, quaint with all the flowers then known in England, were constructed. In the centre of the sward was a small artificial lake, long since dried up, and adorned then with a profusion of fountains, that seemed to scatter coolness around the glowing air. Pitched in various and appropriate sites, were tents of silk and the white cloth of Rennes, each tent so placed as to command one of the alleys; and at the opening of each stood cavalier or dame, with the bow or cross-bow, as it pleased the fancy or suited best the skill, looking for the quarry, which horn and hound drove fast and frequent across the alleys. Such was the luxurious "summer-chase" of the Sardanapalus of the North. Nor could any spectacle more thoroughly represent that poetical yet effeminate taste, which, borrowed from the Italians, made a short interval between the chivalric and the modern age!

The exceeding beauty of the day—the richness of the foliage in the first suns of bright July—the bay of the dogs—the sound of the mellow horn—the fragrance of the air, heavy with noontide flowers—the gay tents —the rich dresses and fair faces and merry laughter of dame and donzell—combined to take captive every sense, and to reconcile ambition itself, that eternal traveller through the future, to the enjoyment of the voluptuous hour. But there were illustrious exceptions to the contentment of the general company.

A courier had arrived that morning to apprise Edward of the unexpected debarkation of the Earl of Warwick, with the Archbishop of Narbonne and the Bastard of Bourbon,—the ambassadors commissioned by Louis to settle the preliminaries of the marriage between Margaret and his brother.

This unwelcome intelligence reached Edward at the very moment he was sallying from his palace gates to his pleasant pastime. He took aside Lord Hastings, and communicated the news to his able favourite.— "Put spurs to thy horse, Hastings, and hie thee fast to Baynard's Castle. Bring back Gloucester. In these difficult matters, that boy's head is better than a council."

"Your highness," said Hastings, tightening his girdle with one hand, while with the other he shortened his stirrups, "shall be obeyed. I foresaw, sire, that this coming would occasion much that my Lords Rivers and Worcester have overlooked. I rejoice that you summon the Prince Richard, who hath wisely forborne all countenance to the Burgundian envoy. But is this all, sire? Is it not well to assemble also your trustiest lords and most learned prelates, if not to overawe Lord Warwick's anger, at least to confer

on the fitting excuses to be made to King Louis's ambassadors?"

"And so lose the fairest day this summer hath bestowed upon us? Tush!—the more need for pleasaunce to-day, since business must come to-morrow. Away with you, dear Will!"

Hastings looked grave, but he saw all further remonstrance would be in vain, and hoping much from the intercession of Gloucester, put spurs to his steed, and vanished. Edward mused a moment; and Elizabeth, who knew every expression and change of his countenance, rode from the circle of her ladies, and approached him timidly. Casting down her eyes, which she always affected in speaking to her lord, the queen said, softly,

"Something hath disturbed my liege and my life's life."

"Marry, yes, sweet Bessee. Last night, to pleasure thee and thy kin (and sooth to say, small gratitude ye owe me, for it also pleased myself), I promised Margaret's hand, through De la Roche, to the heir of Burgundy."

"O princely heart!" exclaimed Elizabeth, her whole face lighted up with triumph—"ever seeking to make happy those it cherishes. But is it that which disturbs thee—that which thou repentest?"

"No, sweetheart—no. Yet had it not been for the strength of the clary, I should have kept the Bastard longer in suspense. But what is done is done. Let not thy roses wither when thou hearest Warwick is in England—nay, nay, child, look not so appalled—thine Edward is no infant, whom ogre and goblin scare; and"—glancing his eye proudly round as he spoke, and saw the goodly cavalcade of his peers and

knights, with his body-guard—tall and chosen veterans —filling up the palace-yard, with the show of casque and pike—" and if the struggle is to come between Edward of England and his subject, never an hour more ripe than this;—my throne assured—the new nobility I have raised, around it—London true, marrow and heart, true—the provinces at peace—the ships and the steel of Burgundy mine allies! Let the White Bear growl as he list, the Lion of March is lord of the forest. And now, my Bessee," added the king, changing his haughty tone into a gay, careless laugh, " now let the lion enjoy his chase."

He kissed the gloved hand of his queen, gallantly bending over his saddle-bow, and the next moment he was by the side of a younger, if not a fairer lady, to whom he was devoting the momentary worship of his inconstant heart. Elizabeth's eyes shot an angry gleam as she beheld her faithless lord thus engaged; but so accustomed to conceal and control the natural jealousy, that it never betrayed itself to the court or to her husband, she soon composed her countenance to its ordinary smooth and artificial smile, and rejoining her mother, she revealed what had passed. The proud and masculine spirit of the duchess felt only joy at the intelligence. In the anticipated humiliation of Warwick, she forgot all cause for fear—not so her husband and son, the Lords Rivers and Scales, to whom the news soon travelled.

" Anthony," whispered the father, " in this game we have staked our heads."

" But our right hands can guard them well, sir," answered Anthony; " and so God and the ladies for our rights! "

Yet this bold reply did not satisfy the more thought-

ful judgment of the lord treasurer, and even the brave Anthony's arrows that day wandered wide of their quarry.

Amidst this gay scene, then, there were anxious and thoughtful bosoms. Lord Rivers was silent and abstracted! his son's laugh was hollow and constrained; the queen, from her pavilion, cast, ever and anon, down the green alleys more restless and prying looks than the hare or the deer could call forth; her mother's brow was knit and flushed—and keenly were those illustrious persons watched by one deeply interested in the coming events. Affecting to discharge the pleasant duty assigned him by the king, the Lord Montagu glided from tent to tent, inquiring courteously into the accommodation of each group, lingering, smiling, complimenting, watching, heeding, studying, those whom he addressed. For the first time since the Bastard's visit, he had joined in the diversions in its honour, and yet so well had Montagu played his part at the court, that he did not excite amongst the queen's relatives any of the hostile feelings entertained towards his brother. No man, except Hastings, was so "entirely loved" by Edward; and Montagu, worldly as he was, and indignant against the king, as he could not fail to be, so far repaid the affection, that his chief fear at that moment sincerely was, not for Warwick, but for Edward. He alone of those present was aware of the cause of Warwick's hasty return, for he had privately despatched to him the news of the Bastard's visit, its real object, and the inevitable success of the intrigues afloat, unless the earl could return at once, his mission accomplished, and the ambassadors of France in his train; and even before the courier despatched to the king had arrived

at Shene, a private hand had conveyed to Montagu the information that Warwick, justly roused and alarmed, had left the state procession behind at Dover, and was hurrying, fast as relays of steeds and his own fiery spirit could bear him, to the presence of the ungrateful king.

Meanwhile the noon had now declined, the sport relaxed, and the sound of the trumpet from the king's pavilion proclaimed that the lazy pastime was to give place to the luxurious banquet.

At this moment, Montagu approached a tent remote from the royal pavilions, and, as his noiseless footstep crushed the grass, he heard the sound of voices, in which there was little in unison with the worldly thoughts that filled his breast.

"Nay, sweet mistress, nay," said a young man's voice, earnest with emotion—"do not misthink me—do not deem me bold and overweening. I have sought to smother my love and to rate it, and bring pride to my aid, but in vain; and, now, whether you will scorn my suit or not, I remember, Sibyll—O Sibyll! I remember the days when we conversed together, and as a brother, if nothing else—nothing dearer—I pray you to pause well, and consider what manner of man this Lord Hastings is said to be!"

"Master Nevile, is this generous?—why afflict me thus?—why couple my name with so great a lord's?"

"Because—beware—the young gallants already so couple it, and their prophecies are not to thine honour, Sibyll. Nay, do not frown on me. I know thou art fair and winsome, and deftly gifted, and they father may, for aught I know, be able to coin thee a queen's dower out of his awsome engines. But Hastings will not wed thee, and his wooing, therefore, but stains thy fair repute; while I——"

"You!" said Montagu, entering suddenly—"you, kinsman, may look to higher fortunes than the Duchess of Bedford's waiting-damsel can bring to thy honest love. How now, mistress, say—wilt thou take this young gentleman for loving fere and plighted spouse? If so, he shall give thee a manor for jointure, and thou shalt wear velvet robe and gold chain, as a knight's wife."

This unexpected interference, which was perfectly in character with the great lords, who frequently wooed in very peremptory tones for their clients and kinsmen,* completed the displeasure which the blunt Marmaduke had already called forth in Sibyll's gentle but proud nature. "Speak, maiden, ay or no?" continued Montagu, surprised and angered at the haughty silence of one whom he just knew by sight and name, though he had never before addressed her.

"No, my lord," answered Sibyll, keeping down her indignation at this tone, though it burned in her cheek, flashed in her eye, and swelled in the heave of her breast. "No! and your kinsman might have spared this affront to one whom—but it matters not." She swept from the tent as she said this, and passed up the alley, into that of the queen's mother.

"Best so; thou art too young for marriage, Marmaduke," said Montagu, coldly. "We will find thee a richer bride ere long. There is Mary of Winstown—the archbishop's ward—with two castles and seven knight's fees."

"But so marvellously ill-featured, my lord," said poor Marmaduke, sighing.

* See, in Miss Strickland's "Life of Elizabeth Woodville," the curious letters which the Duke of York and the Earl of Warwick addressed to her, then a simple maiden, in favour of their *protégé*, Sir R. Johnes.

Montagu looked at him in surprise. "Wives, sir," he said, "are not made to look at,—unless, indeed, they be the wives of other men. But dismiss these follies for the nonce. Back to thy post by the king's pavilion; and, by the way, ask Lord Fauconberg and Aymer Nevile, whom thou wilt pass by yonder arbour —ask them, in my name, to be near the pavilion while the king banquets. A word in thine ear—ere yon sun gilds the top of those green oaks, the Earl of Warwick will be with Edward IV.; and, come what may, some brave hearts should be by to welcome him. Go!"

Without tarrying for an answer, Montagu turned into one of the tents, wherein Raoul de Fulke and the Lord St. John, heedless of hind and hart, conferred; and Marmaduke, much bewildered, and bitterly wroth with Sibyll, went his way.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT ACTOR RETURNS TO FILL THE STAGE

And now, in various groups, these summer foresters were at rest in their afternoon banquet; some lying on the smooth sward around the lake—some in the tents —some again in the arbours; here and there the forms of dame and cavalier might be seen, stealing apart from the rest, and gliding down the alleys till lost in the shade—for under that reign, gallantry was universal. Before the king's pavilion a band of those merry jongleurs, into whom the ancient and honoured minstrels were fast degenerating, stood waiting for the signal to commence their sports, and listening to

the laughter that came in frequent peals from the royal tent. Within feasted Edward, the Count de la Roche, the Lord Rivers; while in a larger and more splendid pavilion, at some little distance, the queen, her mother, and the great dames of the court, held their own slighter and less noisy repast.

"And here, then," said Edward, as he put his lips to a gold goblet, wrought with gems, and passed it to Anthony the Bastard—"here, count, we take the first wassail to the loves of Charolois and Margaret!"

The count drained the goblet, and the wine gave him new fire.

"And with those loves, king," said he, "we bind for ever Burgundy and England. Woe to France!"

"Ay, woe to France!" exclaimed Edward, his face lighting up with that martial joy which it ever took at the thoughts of war—"for we will wrench her lands from this huckster, Louis. By Heaven! I shall not rest in peace till York hath regained what Lancaster hath lost; and out of the parings of the realm which I will add to England, thy brother of Burgundy shall have eno' to change his duke's diadem for a king's. How now, Rivers? Thou gloomest, father mine."

"My liege," said Rivers, wakening himself, "I did but think that if the Earl of Warwick——"

"Ah! I had forgotten," interrupted Edward; "and, sooth to say, Count Anthony, I think if the earl were by, he would not much mend our boon-fellowship!"

"Yet a good subject," said De la Roche, sneeringly, "usually dresses his face by that of his king."

"A subject! Ay, but Warwick is much such a subject to England as William of Normandy or Duke Rollo was to France. Howbeit, let him come—our realm is at peace—we want no more his battle-axe;

and in our new designs on France, thy brother, bold count, is an ally that might compensate for a greater loss than a sullen minister. Let him come!"

As the king spoke, there was heard gently upon the smooth turf the sound of the hoofs of steeds. A moment more, and from the outskirts of the scene of revel, where the king's guards were stationed, there arose a long, loud shout. Nearer and nearer came the hoofs of the steeds—they paused. "Doubtless, Richard of Gloucester by that shout! The soldiers love that brave boy," said the king.

Marmaduke Nevile, as a gentleman in waiting, drew aside the curtain of the pavilion; and as he uttered a name that paled the cheeks of all who heard, the Earl of Warwick entered the royal presence.

The earl's dress was disordered and soiled by travel; the black plume on his cap was broken, and hung darkly over his face; his horseman's boots, coming half way up the thigh, were sullied with the dust of the journey; and yet as he entered, before the majesty of his mien, the grandeur of his stature, suddenly De la Roche, Rivers, even the gorgeous Edward himself, seemed dwarfed into common men! About the man—his air, his eye, his form, his attitude—there was THAT which, in the earlier times, made kings by the acclamation of the crowd,—an unmistakable sovereignty, as of one whom Nature herself had shaped and stamped for power and for rule. All three had risen as he entered; and to a deep silence succeeded an exclamation from Edward, and then again all was still.

The earl stood a second or two calmly gazing on the effect he had produced; and turning his dark eye from one to the other, till it rested full upon De la

Roche, who, after vainly striving not to quail beneath the gaze, finally smiled with affected disdain, and, resting his hand on his dagger, sunk back into his seat.

"My liege," then said Warwick, doffing his cap, and approaching the king with slow and grave respect, "I crave pardon for presenting myself to your highness thus travel-worn and disordered, but I announce that news which insures my welcome. The solemn embassy of trust committed to me by your grace has prospered with God's blessing; and the Fils de Bourbon and the Archbishop of Narbonne are on their way to your metropolis. Alliance between the two great monarchies of Europe is concluded on terms that insure the weal of England and augment the lustre of your crown. Your claims on Normandy and Guienne, King Louis consents to submit to the arbitrement of the Roman Pontiff,* and to pay to your treasury annual tribute; these advantages, greater than your highness even empowered me to demand, thus obtained, the royal brother of your new ally joyfully awaits the hand of the Lady Margaret."

"Cousin," said Edward, who had thoroughly recovered himself,—motioning the earl to a seat, "you are ever welcome, no matter what your news; but I marvel much that so deft a statesman should broach these matters of council in the unseasonable hour, and before the gay comrades, of a revel."

"I speak, sire," said Warwick, calmly, though the veins in his forehead swelled, and his dark countenance was much flushed—"I speak openly of that which

* The Pope, moreover, was to be engaged to decide the question within four years. A more brilliant treaty for England Edward's ambassador could not have effected.

hath been done nobly; and this truth has ceased to be matter of council, since the meanest citizen who hath ears and eyes, ere this, must know for what purpose the ambassadors of King Louis arrive in England with your highness's representative."

Edward, more embarrassed at this tone than he could have foreseen, remained silent; but De la Roche, impatient to humble his brother's foe, and judging it also discreet to arouse the king, said carelessly—

"It were a pity, sir earl, that the citizens, whom you thus deem privy to the thoughts of kings, had not prevised the Archbishop of Narbonne, that if he desire to see a fairer show than even the palaces of Westminster and the Tower, he will hasten back to behold the banners of Burgundy and England waving from the spires of Notre Dame."

Ere the Bastard had concluded, Rivers, leaning back, whispered the king—"For Christ's sake, sire, select some fitter scene for what must follow! Silence your guest!"

But Edward, on the contrary, pleased to think that De la Roche was breaking the ice, and hopeful that some burst from Warwick would give him more excuse than he felt at present for a rupture, said sternly, "Hush, my lord, and meddle not!"

"Unless I mistake," said Warwick, coldly, "he who now accosts me is the Count de la Roche—a foreigner."

"And the brother of the heir of Burgundy," interrupted De la Roche—"brother to the betrothed and princely spouse of Margaret of England."

"Doth this man lie, sire?" said Warwick, who had seated himself a moment, and who now rose again.

The Bastard sprung also to his feet, but Edward,

waving him back, and reassuming the external dignity which rarely forsook him, replied,—"Cousin, thy question lacketh courtesy to our noble guest: since thy departure, reasons of state, which we will impart to thee at a meeter season, have changed our purpose, and we will now that our sister Margaret shall wed with the Count of Charolois."

"And this to me, king!" exclaimed the earl, all his passions at once released—"this to me!—Nay, frown not, Edward—I am of the race of those who, greater than kings, have built thrones and toppled them! I tell thee, thou hast misused mine honour, and belied thine own—thou hast debased thyself in juggling me, delegated as the representative of thy royalty!—Lord Rivers, stand back—there are barriers eno' between truth and a king!"

"By St. George and my father's head!" cried Edward, with a rage no less fierce than Warwick's—"thou abusest, false lord, my mercy and our kindred blood. Another word, and thou leavest this pavilion for the Tower!"

"King!" replied Warwick, scornfully, and folding his arms on his broad breast—"there is not a hair on this head which thy whole house, thy guards, and thine armies could dare to touch. ME to the Tower! Send me—and when the third sun reddens the roof of prison-house and palace,—look round broad England, and miss a throne!"

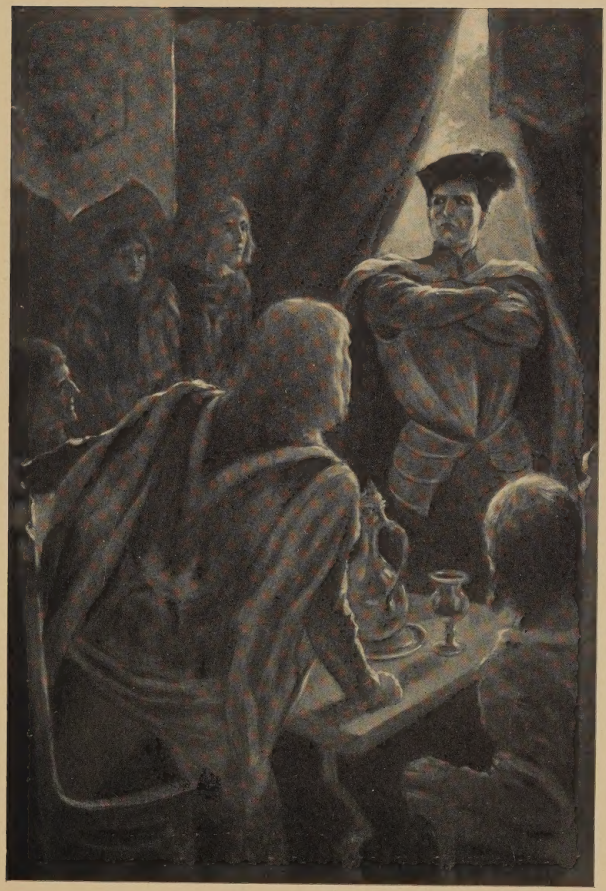
"What ho there!" exclaimed Edward, stamping his foot; and at that instant the curtain of the pavilion was hastily torn aside, and Richard of Gloucester entered, followed by Lord Hastings, the Duke of Clarence, and Anthony Woodville.

"Ah!" continued the king, "ye come in time.

George of Clarence, Lord High Constable of England —arrest yon naughty man, who dares to menace his liege and suzerain!"

Gliding between Clarence, who stood dumb and thunder-stricken, and the Earl of Warwick,—Prince Richard said, in a voice which, though even softer than usual, had in it more command over those who heard than when it rolled in thunder along the ranks of Barnet or of Bosworth,—"Edward, my brother, remember Touton, and forbear—Warwick, my cousin, forget not thy king nor his dead father!"

At these last words the earl's face fell; for to that father he had sworn to succour and defend the sons: his sense recovering from his pride, showed him how much his intemperate anger had thrown away his advantages in the foul wrong he had sustained from Edward. Meanwhile the king himself, with flashing eyes, and a crest as high as Warwick's, was about, perhaps, to overthrow his throne by the attempt to enforce his threat, when Anthony Woodville, who followed Clarence, whispered to him—"Beware, sire! a countless crowd that seem to have followed the earl's steps, have already pierced the chase, and can scarcely be kept from the spot, so great is their desire to behold him. Beware!"—and Richard's quick ear catching these whispered words, the duke suddenly backed them by again drawing aside the curtain of the tent. Along the sward, the guard of the king summoned from their unseen but neighbouring post within the wood, were drawn up as if to keep back an immense multitude—men, women, children, who swayed, and rustled, and murmured in the rear. But no sooner was the curtain drawn aside, and the guards themselves caught sight of the royal princes, and the great earl towering amidst



"King! there is not a hair on this head which thy whole house could dare to touch."

them, than supposing, in their ignorance, the scene thus given to them was intended for their gratification, from that old soldiery of Touton rose a loud and long "Hurrah—Warwick and the king"—"The king and the stout earl." The mutitude behind caught the cry; they rushed forward, mingling with the soldiery, who no longer sought to keep them back.

"A Warwick! a Warwick!" they shouted.

"God bless the people's friend!"

Edward, startled and aghast, drew sullenly into the rear of the tent.

De la Roche grew pale, but with the promptness of a practised statesman, he hastily advanced, and drew the curtain.

"Shall varlets," he said to Richard, in French, "gloat over the quarrels of their lords?"

"You are right, Sir Count," murmured Richard, meekly; his purpose was effected, and leaning on his riding staff, he awaited what was to ensue.

A softer shade had fallen over the earl's face, at the proof of the love in which his name was held; it almost seemed to his noble, though haughty and impatient nature, as if the affection of the people had reconciled him to the ingratitude of the king. A tear started to his proud eye, but he twinkled it away, and approaching Edward (who remained erect, and with all a sovereign's wrath, though silent on his lip, lowering on his brow), he said, in a tone of suppressed emotion:—

"Sire, it is not for me to crave pardon of living man but the grievous affront put upon my state and mine honour, hath led my words to an excess which my heart repents. I grieve that your grace's highness hath chosen this alliance; hereafter you may find at need what faith is to be placed in Burgundy."

"Darest thou gainsay it?" exclaimed De la Roche.

"Interrupt me not, sir!" continued Warwick, with a disdainful gesture. "My liege, I lay down mine offices, and I leave it to your grace to account as it lists you to the ambassadors of France—I shall vindicate myself to their king. And now, ere I depart for my hall of Middleham, I alone here, unarmed, and unattended, save, at least, by a single squire, I, Richard Nevile, say, that if any man, peer or knight, can be found to execute your grace's threat, and arrest me, I will obey your royal pleasure, and attend him to the Tower." Haughtily he bowed his head as he spoke, and raising it again, gazed around—"I await your grace's pleasure."

"Begone where thou wilt, earl. From this day Edward IV. reigns alone," said the king. Warwick turned.

"My Lord Scales," said he, "lift the curtain; nay, sir, it misdemeans you not. You are still the son of the Woodville, I still the descendant of John of Gaunt."

"Not for the dead ancestor, but for the living warrior," said the Lord Scales, lifting the curtain, and bowing with knightly grace as the earl passed. And scarcely was Warwick in the open space, than the crowd fairly broke through all restraint, and the clamour of their joy filled with its hateful thunders the royal tent.

"Edward," said Richard, whisperingly, and laying his finger on his brother's arm—"forgive me if I offended, but had you, at such a time, resolved on violence——"

"I see it all—you were right. But is this to be endured for ever?"

"Sire," returned Richard, with his dark smile, "rest calm; for the age is your best ally, and the age is outgrowing the steel and hauberk. A little while, and——"

"And what——"

"And—ah, sire, I will answer that question when our brother George (mark him!) either refrains from listening, or is married to Isabel Nevile, and hath quarrel with her rather about the dowry. What, ho, there! —let the jongleurs perform."

"The jongleurs!" exclaimed the king; "why, Richard, thou hast more levity than myself!"

"Pardon me! Let the jongleurs perform, and bid the crowd stay. It is by laughing at the mountebanks that your grace can best lead the people to forget their Warwick!"

CHAPTER X

HOW THE GREAT LORDS COME TO THE KING-MAKER, AND WITH WHAT PROFFERS

Mastering the emotions that swelled within him, Lord Warwick returned, with his wonted cheerful courtesy, the welcome of the crowd, and the enthusiastic salutations of the king's guard; but as, at length, he mounted his steed, and attended but by the squire who had followed him from Dover, penetrated into the solitudes of the chase, the recollection of the indignity he had suffered smote his proud heart so sorely, that he groaned aloud. His squire, fearing the fatigue he had undergone might have affected even that iron health, rode up at the sound of the groan, and Warwick's face was hueless as he said, with a forced smile—"It is nothing, Walter. But these heats are oppres-

sive, and we have forgotten our morning draught, friend. Hark! I hear the brawl of a rivulet, and a drink of fresh water were more grateful now than the daintiest hippocras." So saying, he flung himself from his steed; following the sound of the rivulet, he gained its banks, and after quenching his thirst in the hollow of his hand, laid himself down upon the long grass, waving coolly over the margin, and fell into profound thought. From this reverie he was roused by a quick footstep, and as he lifted his gloomy gaze, he beheld Marmaduke Nevile by his side.

"Well, young man," said he sternly, "with what messages art thou charged?"

"With none, my lord earl. I await now no commands but thine."

"Thou knowest not, poor youth, that I can serve thee no more. Go back to the court."

"Oh, Warwick," said Marmaduke, with simple eloquence, "send me not from thy side! This day I have been rejected by the maid I loved. I loved her well, and my heart chafed sorely, and bled within! but now, methinks, it consoles me to have been so cast off—to have no faith, no love, but that which is best of all, to a brave man,—love and faith for a herochief! Where thy fortunes, there be my humble fate —to rise or fall with thee!"

Warwick looked intently upon his young kinsman's face, and said, as to himself, "Why, this is strange! I gave no throne to this man, and he deserts me not! My friend," he added, aloud, "have they told thee already that I am disgraced?"

"I heard the Lord Scales say to the young Lovell, that thou wert dismissed from all thine offices; and I came hither; for I will serve no more the king who

forgets the arm and heart to which he owes a kingdom."

"Man, I accept thy loyalty!" exclaimed Warwick, starting to his feet; "and know that thou hast done more to melt, and yet to nerve my spirit than—but complaints in me are idle, and praise were no reward to thee."

"But see, my lord, if the first to join thee, I am not the sole one. See, brave Raoul de Fulke, the Lords of St. John, Bergavenny, and Fitzhugh, ay, and fifty others of the best blood of England, are on thy track."

And as he spoke, plumes and tunics were seen gleaming up the forest path, and in another moment a troop of knights and gentlemen, comprising the flower of such of the ancient nobility as yet lingered round the court, came up to Warwick, bareheaded.

"Is it possible," cried Raoul de Fulke, "that we have heard aright, noble earl? And has Edward IV. suffered the base Woodvilles to triumph over the bulwark of his realm?"

"Knights and gentles!" said Warwick, with a bitter smile, "is it so uncommon a thing that men in peace should leave the battle-axe and brand to rust? I am but a useless weapon, to be suspended at rest amongst the trophies of Touton in my hall of Middleham."

"Return with us," said the Lord of St. John, "and we will make Edward do thee justice, or, one and all, we will abandon a court where knaves and varlets have become mightier than English valour, and nobler than Norman birth."

"My friends," said the earl, laying his hand on St. John's shoulder, "not even in my just wrath will I wrong my king. He is punished eno' in the choice he

hath made. Poor Edward and poor England! What woes and wars await ye both, from the gold, and the craft, and the unsparing hate of Louis XI.! No; if I leave Edward, he hath more need of you. Of mine own free will, I have resigned mine offices."

"Warwick," interrupted Raoul de Fulke, "this deceives us not; and in disgrace to you, the ancient barons of England behold the first blow at their own state. We have wrongs we endured in silence, while thou wert the shield and sword of yon merchant-king. We have seen the ancient peers of England set aside for men of yesterday; we have seen our daughters, sisters,—nay, our very mothers—if widowed and dowered—forced into disreputable and base wedlock, with creatures dressed in titles, and gilded with wealth stolen from ourselves. Merchants and artificers tread upon our knightly heels, and the avarice of trade eats up our chivalry as a rust. We nobles, in our greater day, have had the crown at our disposal, and William the Norman dared not *think* what Edward Earl of March hath been permitted with impunity to *do*. We, sir earl—we knights and barons—*would* a king simple in his manhood, and princely in his truth. Richard Earl of Warwick, thou art of royal blood—the descendant of old John of Gaunt. In thee we behold the true, the living likeness of the Third Edward, and the Hero-Prince of Cressy. Speak but the word, and we make thee king!"

The descendant of the Norman, the representative of the mighty faction that no English monarch had ever braved in vain, looked round as he said these last words, and a choral murmur was heard through the whole of that august nobility—"We make thee king!"

"Richard, descendant of the Plantagenet,* speak the word," repeated Raoul de Fulke.

"I speak it not," interrupted Warwick; "nor shalt thou continue, brave Raoul de Fulke. What, my lords and gentlemen," he added, drawing himself up, and with his countenance animated with feelings it is scarcely possible in our times to sympathise with or make clear—"what! think you that Ambition limits itself to the narrow circlet of a crown? Greater, and more in the spirit of our mighty fathers, is the condition of men like us, THE BARONS who make and unmake kings. What! who of us would not rather descend from the chiefs of Runnymede than from the royal craven whom they controlled and chid? By Heaven, my lords, Richard Nevile has too proud a soul to be a king! A king—a puppet of state and form; a king—a holiday show for the crowd, to hiss or hurrah, as the humour seizes. A king—a beggar to the nation, wrangling with his parliament for gold! A king!—Richard II. was a king, and Lancaster dethroned him. Ye would debase me to a Henry of Lancaster. Mort Dieu! I thank ye. The Commons and the Lords raised *him*, forsooth,—for what? To hold him as the creature they had made, to rate him, to chafe him, to pry into his very household, and quarrel with his wife's chamberlains and lavourers.† What! dear Raoul de Fulke, is thy friend fallen now so low, that he—Earl of Salisbury and of Warwick, chief of the threefold race of Montagu, Monthermer,

* By the female side, through Joan Beaufort, or Plantagenet, Warwick was third in descent from John of Gaunt, as Henry VII., through the male line, was *fourth* in descent.

† Laundresses. The Parliamentary Rolls, in the reign of Henry IV., abound in curious specimens of the interference of the Commons with the household of Henry's wife, Queen Joan.

and Nevile, lord of a hundred baronies, leader of sixty thousand followers—is not greater than Edward of March, to whom we will deign still, with your permission, to vouchsafe the name and pageant of a king?"

This extraordinary address, strange to say, so thoroughly expressed the peculiar pride of the old barons, that when it ceased a sound of admiration and applause circled through that haughty audience, and Raoul de Fulke, kneeling suddenly, kissed the earl's hand: "Oh, noble earl," he said, "ever live as one of US, to maintain our order, and teach kings and nations what WE are."

"Fear it not, Raoul! fear it not—we will have our rights yet. Return, I beseech ye. Let me feel I have such friends about the king. Even at Middleham, my eye shall watch over our common cause; and till seven feet of earth suffice him, your brother baron, Richard Nevile, is not a man whom kings and courts can forget, much less dishonour. Sirs, our honour is in our bosoms,—and there, is the only throne armies cannot shake, nor cozeners undermine."

With these words he gently waved his hand, motioned to his squire, who stood out of hearing with the steeds, to approach, and mounting, gravely rode on. Ere he had got many paces, he called to Marmaduke, who was on foot, and bade him follow him to London that night. "I have strange tidings to tell the French envoys, and for England's sake I must soothe their anger, if I can,—then to Middleham."

The nobles returned slowly to the pavilions. And as they gained the open space, where the gaudy tents still shone against the setting sun, they beheld the mob of that day, whom Shakespeare hath painted with

such contempt, gathering, laughing and loud, around the mountebank and the conjuror, who had already replaced in their thoughts (as Gloucester had foreseen) the hero-idol of their worship.

BOOK V

THE LAST OF THE BARONS IN HIS FATHER'S HALLS

CHAPTER I

RURAL ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES—NOBLE VISITORS SEEK THE CASTLE OF MIDDLEHAM

Autumn had succeeded to summer—winter to autumn—and the spring of 1468 was green in England, when a gallant cavalcade were seen slowly winding the ascent of a long and gradual hill, towards the decline of day. Different, indeed, from the aspect which that part of the country now presents was the landscape that lay around them, bathed in the smiles of the westering sun. In a valley to the left, a full view of which the steep road commanded (where now roars the din of trade through a thousand factories), lay a long secluded village. The houses, if so they might be called, were constructed entirely of wood, and that of the more perishable kind—willow, sallow, elm, and plumtree. Not one could boast a chimney; but the smoke from the single fire in each, after duly darkening the atmosphere within, sent its surplusage, lazily and fitfully, through a circular aperture in the roof. In fact, there was long in the provinces a prejudice against chimneys! The smoke was considered good both for house and owner: the first it was supposed to season, and the last to guard "from rheums, catarrhs, and

poses." * Neither did one of these habitations boast the comfort of a glazed window, the substitute being lattice, or chequer-work—even in the house of the franklin, which rose statelily above the rest, encompassed with barns and outsheds. And yet greatly should we err did we conceive that these deficiencies were an index to the general condition of the working-class. Far better off was the labourer, *when employed*, than now. Wages were enormously high, meat extremely low; † and our mother-land bountifully maintained her children.

On that greensward, before the village (now foul and reeking with the squalid population, whom commerce rears up—the victims, as the movers of the modern world) were assembled youth and age; for it was a holiday evening, and the stern Puritan had not yet risen to sour the face of Mirth. Well clad in leathern jerkin, or even broadcloth, the young peasants vied with each other in quoits and wrestling; while the merry laughter of the girls, in their gay-coloured kirtles, and ribboned hair, rose oft and cheerily to the ears of the cavalcade. From a gentle eminence beyond the village, and half veiled by trees, on which the first verdure of spring was budding (where now,

* So worthy Hollinshed, Book II., c. 22.—"Then had we none but reredosses, and our heads did never ache. For as the smoke, in those days, was supposed to be a sufficient hardening for the timber of the house, so it was reputed a far better medicine to keep the goodman and his familie from the quacke, or pose, wherewith as then very few were oft acquainted."

† See Hallam's "Middle Ages," chap. xx., Part II. So also Hollinshed, Book XI., c. 12, comments on the amazement of the Spaniards, in Queen Mary's time, when they saw, "what large diet was used in these so homelie cottages," and reports one of the Spaniards to have said, "These English have their houses of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonlie so well as the king!"

around the gin-shop gather the fierce and sickly children of toil and of discontent), rose the venerable walls of a monastery, and the chime of its heavy bell swung far and sweet over the pastoral landscape. To the right of the road (where now stands the sober meeting-house) was one of those small shrines so frequent in Italy, with an image of the Virgin gaudily painted, and before it each cavalier in the procession halted an instant to cross himself, and mutter an ave. Beyond, still to the right, extended vast chains of woodland, interspersed with strips of pasture, upon which numerous flocks were grazing, with horses, as yet unbroken to bit and selle, that neighed and snorted as they caught scent of their more civilised brethren pacing up the road.

In front of the cavalcade rode two, evidently of superior rank to the rest. The one small and slight, with his long hair flowing over his shoulders; and the other, though still young, many years older; and indicating his clerical profession by the absence of all love-locks, compensated by a curled and glossy beard, trimmed with the greatest care. But the dress of the ecclesiastic was as little according to our modern notions of what beseems the church as can well be conceived: his tunic and surcoat, of a rich amber, contrasted well with the clear darkness of his complexion; his piked shoes or beakers, as they were called, turned up half-way to the knee; the buckles of his dress were of gold, inlaid with gems; and the housings of his horse, which was of great power, were edged with gold fringe. By the side of his steed walked a tall greyhound, upon which he ever and anon glanced with affection. Behind these rode two gentlemen, whose golden spurs announced knighthood; and then followed a long train of squires

and pages, richly clad and accoutred, bearing generally the Nevile badge of the bull; though interspersed amongst the retinue might be seen the grim boar's head, which Richard of Gloucester, in right of his duchy, had assumed as his cognisance.

"Nay, sweet prince," said the ecclesiastic, "I pray thee to consider that a greyhound is far more of a gentleman than any other of the canine species. Mark his stately yet delicate length of limb—his sleek coat—his keen eye—his haughty neck."

"These are but the externals, my noble friend. Will the greyhound attack the lion, as our mastiff doth? The true character of the gentleman is to know no fear, and to rush through all danger at the throat of his foe; wherefore I uphold the dignity of the mastiff above all his tribe, though others have a daintier hide, and a statelier crest. Enough of such matters, archbishop—we are nearing Middleham."

"The saints be praised! for I am hungered," observed the archbishop, piously: "but, sooth to say, my cook at the More far excelleth what we can hope to find at the board of my brother. He hath some faults, our Warwick! Hasty and careless, he hath not thought eno' of the blessings he might enjoy, and many a poor abbot hath daintier fair on his humble table."

"Oh, George Nevile! who that heard thee, when thou talkest of hounds and interments,* would recognise the Lord Chancellor of England—the most learned dignitary—the most subtle statesman?"

"And oh, Richard Plantagenet!" retorted the archbishop, dropping the mincing and affected tone, which he in common with the coxcombs of that day usually assumed, "who that heard thee, when thou talkest of

* Interments, *entremets* (side dishes).

humility and devotion, would recognise the sternest heart and the most daring ambition God ever gave to prince?"

Richard started at these words, and his eye shot fire as it met the keen calm gaze of the prelate.

"Nay, your grace wrongs me," he said, gnawing his lip—"or I should not say wrongs, but flatters; for sternness and ambition are no vices in a Nevile's eyes."

"Fairly answered, royal son," said the archbishop, laughing; "but let us be frank.—Thou hast persuaded me to accompany thee to Lord Warwick as a mediator; the provinces in the north are disturbed; the intrigues of Margaret of Anjou are restless; the king reaps what he has sown in the Court of France, and, as Warwick foretold, the emissaries and gold of Louis are ever at work against his throne: the great barons are moody and discontented; and our liege King Edward is at last aware that, if the Earl of Warwick do not return to his councils, the first blast of a hostile trumpet may drive him from his throne. Well, I attend thee: my fortunes are woven with those of York, and my interest and my loyalty go hand in hand. Be equally frank with me. Hast thou, Lord Richard, no interest to serve in this mission save that of the public weal!"

"Thou forgettest that the Lady Isabel is dearly loved by Clarence, and that I would fain see removed all barrier to his nuptial bliss. But yonder rise the towers of Middleham. Beloved walls, which sheltered my childhood! and, by holy Paul, a noble pile, which would resist an army, or hold one."

While thus conversed the prince and the archbishop, the Earl of Warwick, musing and alone, slowly paced the lofty terrace that crested the battlements of his outer fortifications.

In vain had that restless and powerful spirit sought content in retirement. Trained from his childhood to active life—to move mankind to and fro at his beck—this single and sudden interval of repose in the prime of his existence, at the height of his fame, served but to swell the turbulent and dangerous passions to which all vent was forbidden.

The statesman of modern days has at least food for intellect, in letters, when deprived of action; but with all his talents, and thoroughly cultivated as his mind was in the camp, the council, and the state, the great earl cared for nothing in book-lore, except some rude ballad that told of Charlemagne or Rollo. The sports that had pleased the leisure of his earlier youth were tedious and flat to one snatched from so mighty a career. His hound lay idle at his feet, his falcon took holiday on the perch, his jester was banished to the page's table.—Behold the repose of this great unlettered spirit! But while his mind was thus debarred from its native sphere, all tended to pamper Lord Warwick's infirmity of pride. The ungrateful Edward might forget him; but the king seemed to stand alone in that oblivion. The mightiest peers, the most renowned knights, gathered to his hall. Middleham, not Windsor, nor Shene, nor Westminster, nor the Tower, seemed the COURT OF ENGLAND. As the Last of the Barons paced his terrace, far as his eye could reach his broad domains extended, studded with villages, and towns, and castles, swarming with his retainers. The whole country seemed in mourning for his absence. The name of Warwick was in all men's mouths, and not a group gathered in market-place or hostel, but what the minstrel who had some ballad in praise of the stout earl found a rapt and thrilling audience.

"And is the river of my life," muttered Warwick, "shrunk into this stagnant pool! Happy the man who hath never known what it is to taste of Fame—to have it is a purgatory, to want it is a hell!"

Wrapped in this gloomy self-commune, he heard not the light step that sought his side, till a tender arm was thrown around him, and a face in which sweet temper and pure thought had preserved to matronly beauty all the bloom of youth, looked up smilingly to his own.

"My lord—my Richard," said the countess, "why didst thou steal so churlishly from me? Hath there, alas! come a time when thou deemest me unworthy to share thy thoughts, or soothe thy troubles?"

"Fond one! no," said Warwick, drawing the form still light, though rounded, nearer to his bosom. "For nineteen years hast thou been to me a leal and loving wife. Thou wert a child on our wedding-day, *m'amie*, and I but a beardless youth; yet wise enough was I then to see, at the first glance of thy blue eye, that there was more treasure in thy heart than in all the lordships thy hand bestowed."

"My Richard!" murmured the countess, and her tears of grateful delight fell on the hand she kissed.

"Yes, let us recall those early and sweet days," continued Warwick, with a tenderness of voice and manner that strangers might have marvelled at, forgetting how tenderness is almost ever a part of such peculiar manliness of character—"yes, sit we here under this spacious elm, and think that our youth has come back to us once more. For verily, *m'amie*, nothing in life has ever been so fair to me, as those days when we stood hand in hand on its threshold, and talked, boy-bride-groom and child-bride as we were, of the morrow that lay beyond."

"Ah, Richard, even in those days thy ambition sometimes vexed my woman vanity, and showed me that I could never be all in all to so large a heart!"

"Ambition! No, thou mistakest—Montagu is ambitious, I but proud. Montagu ever seeks to be higher than he is, I but assert the right to be what I am and have been; and my pride, sweet wife, is a part of my love for thee. It is thy title, Heiress of Warwick, and not my father's, that I bear; thy badge, and not the Nevile's, which I have made the symbol of my power. Shame, indeed, on my knighthood, if the fairest dame in England could not justify my pride! Ah! *belle amie*, why have we not a son?"

"Peradventure, fair lord," said the countess, with an arch yet half-melancholy smile, "because that pride or ambition, name it as thou wilt, which thou excusest so gallantly, would become too insatiate and limitless, if thou sawest a male heir to thy greatness; and God, perhaps, warns thee that, spread and increase as thou wilt,—yea, until half our native country becometh as the manor of one man—all must pass from the Beauchamp and the Nevile into new houses; thy glory, indeed, an eternal heirloom, but only to thy land—thy lordships and thy wealth melting into the dowry of a daughter."

"At least, no king hath daughters so dowried," answered Warwick; "and though I disdain for myself the hard vassalage of a throne, yet, if the channel of our blood must pass into other streams—into nothing meaner than the veins of loyalty should it merge." He paused a moment, and added with a sigh—"Would that Clarence were more worthy Isabel!"

"Nay," said the countess, gently, "he loveth her as she merits. He is comely, brave, gracious, and learned."

"A pest upon that learning—it sicklies and womanises men's minds!" exclaimed Warwick, bluntly. "Perhaps it is his learning that I am to thank for George of Clarence's fears, and doubts, and calculations and scruples. His brother forbids his marriage with any English donzell, for Edward dares not specialise what alone he dreads. His letters burn with love, and his actions freeze with doubts. It was not thus I loved thee, sweetheart. By all the saints in the calendar, had Henry V. or the Lion Richard started from the tomb to forbid me thy hand, it would but have made me a hotter lover! Howbeit Clarence shall decide ere the moon wanes, and but for Isabel's tears and thy entreaties, my father's grandchild should not have waited thus long the coming of so hesitating a wooer. But lo, our darlings! Anne hath thine eyes, *m'amie;* and she groweth more into my heart every day, since daily she more favours thee."

While he thus spoke, the fair sisters came lightly and gaily up the terrace: the arm of the statelier Isabel was twined round Anne's slender waist; and as they came forward in that gentle link, with their lithesome and bounding step, a happier blending of contrasted beauty was never seen. The months that had passed since the sisters were presented first to the reader had little changed the superb and radiant loveliness of Isabel, but had added surprisingly to the attractions of Anne. Her form was more rounded, her bloom more ripened, and though something of timidity and bashfulness still lingered about the grace of her movements and the glance of her dove-like eye, the more earnest thoughts of the awakening woman gave sweet intelligence to her countenance, and that divinest of all attractions—the touching and conscious modesty to the shy but ten-

der smile—and the blush that so came and went, so went and came, that it stirred the heart with a sort of delighted pity for one so evidently susceptible to every emotion of pleasure and of pain. Life seemed too rough a thing for so soft a nature, and gazing on her, one sighed to guess her future.

"And what brings ye hither, young truants?" said the earl, as Anne, leaving her sister, clung lovingly to his side (for it was ever her habit to cling to some one), while Isabel kissed her mother's hand, and then stood before her parents, colouring deeply, and with downcast eyes. "What brings ye hither, whom I left so lately deep engaged in the loom, upon the helmet of Goliath, with my burgonot before you as a sample? Wife, you are to blame—our room of state will be arrasless for the next three generations, if these rosy fingers are suffered thus to play the idlers."

"My father," whispered Anne, "guests are on their way hither,—a noble cavalcade; you note them not from this part of the battlements, but from our turret it was fair to see how their plumes and banners shone in the setting sun."

"Guests!" echoed the earl; "well, is that so rare an honour that your hearts should beat like village girls at a holiday? Ah, Isabel! look at her blushes. Is it George of Clarence at last? Is it?"

"We see the Duke of Gloucester's cognisance," whispered Anne, "and our own Nevile Bull. Perchance our cousin George, also, may——"

Here she was interrupted by the sound of the warder's horn, followed a moment after by the roar of one of the bombards on the keep.

"At least," said Warwick, his face lighting up, "that signal announces the coming of king's blood. We

must honour it,—for it is our own. We will go forth and meet our guests—your hand, countess."

And gravely and silently, and in deep but no longer gloomy thought, Warwick descended from the terrace, followed by the fair sisters; and who that could have looked upon that princely pair, and those lovely and radiant children, could have foreseen, that in that hour, Fate, in tempting the earl once more to action, was busy on their doom!

CHAPTER II

COUNCILS AND MUSINGS

The lamp shone through the lattice of Warwick's chamber at the unwonted hour of midnight, and the earl was still in deep commune with his guests. The archbishop, whom Edward, alarmed by the state of the country, and the disaffection of his barons, had reluctantly commissioned to mediate with Warwick, was, as we have before said, one of those men peculiar to the early Church. There was nothing more in the title of Archbishop of York than in that of the Bishop of Osnaburg (borne by the royal son of George III.*), to prevent him who enjoyed it from leading armies, guiding states, or indulging pleasure. But beneath the coxcombry of George Nevile, which was what he shared most in common with the courtiers of the laity, there lurked a true ecclesiastic's mind. He would have made, in later times, an admirable Jesuit, and no doubt, in his own time, a very brilliant pope. His objects in his present mission were clear and perspicuous; any breach between Warwick and the king must necessarily

* The late Duke of York.

weaken his own position, and the power of his house was essential to all his views. The object of Gloucester in his intercession was less defined, but not less personal: in smoothing the way to his brother's marriage with Isabel, he removed all apparent obstacle to his own with Anne. And it is probable that Richard, who, whatever his crimes, was far from inaccessible to affection, might have really loved his early playmate, even while his ambition calculated the wealth of the baronies that would swell the dower of the heiress, and gild the barren coronet of his duchy.*

"God's truth!" said Warwick, as he lifted his eyes from the scroll in the king's writing, "ye know well, princely cousin, and thou, my brother, ye know well how dearly I have loved King Edward; and the mother's milk overflows my heart, when I read these gentle and tender words, which he deigns to bestow upon his servant. My blood is hasty and over-hot, but a kind thought from those I love puts out much fire. Sith he thus beseeches me to return to his councils, I will not be sullen enough to hold back; but, oh, Prince Richard! is it indeed a matter past all consideration, that your sister, the Lady Margaret, must wed with the Duke of Burgundy?"

"Warwick," replied the prince, "thou mayst know that I never looked with favour on that alliance; that when Clarence bore the Bastard's helmet, I withheld my countenance from the Bastard's presence. I incurred Edward's anger by refusing to attend his court while the Count de la Roche was his guest. And therefore you may trust me when I say now that Edward,

* Majerus, the Flemish chronicler, quoted by Bucke (Life of Richard III.), mentions the early attachment of Richard to Anne. They were much together, as children, at Middleham.

after promises, however rash, most solemn and binding, is dishonoured for ever if he break off the contract. New circumstances, too, have arisen, to make what were dishonour, danger also. By the death of his father, Charolois has succeeded to the Duke of Burgundy's diadem. Thou knowest his warlike temper, and though in a contest popular in England we need fear no foe, yet thou knowest also that no subsidies could be raised for strife with our most profitable commercial ally. Wherefore we earnestly implore thee magnanimously to forgive the past, accept Edward's assurance of repentance, and be thy thought—as it has been ever—the weal of our common country."

"I may add, also," said the archbishop, observing how much Warwick was touched and softened,—"that in returning to the helm of state, our gracious king permits me to say, that, save only in the alliance with Burgundy, which toucheth his plighted word, you have full liberty to name conditions, and to ask whatever grace or power a monarch can bestow."

"I name none but my prince's confidence," said Warwick, generously, "in that, all else is given, and in return for that, I will make the greatest sacrifice that my nature knoweth, or can conceive—I will mortify my familiar demon—I will subdue my PRIDE. If Edward can convince me that it is for the good of England that his sister should wed with mine ancient and bitter foe, I will myself do honour to his choice. But of this hereafter. Enough, now that I forget past wrongs in present favour; and that for peace or war, I return to the side of that man whom I loved as my son, before I served him as my king."

Neither Richard nor the archbishop was prepared for a conciliation so facile, for neither quite understood

that peculiar magnanimity which often belongs to a vehement and hasty temper, and which is as eager to forgive as prompt to take offence—which, ever in extremes, is not contented with anything short of fiery aggression or trustful generosity—and where it once passes over an offence, seeks to oblige the offender. So, when, after some further conversation on the state of the country, the earl lighted Gloucester to his chamber, the young prince said to himself, musingly:—

"Does ambition besot and blind men?—or can Warwick think that Edward can ever view him but as one to be destroyed when the hour is ripe?"

Catesby, who was the duke's chamberlain, was in attendance as the prince unrobed.—"A noble castle this," said the duke, "and one in the midst of a warlike population—our own countrymen of York."

"It would be no mean addition to the dowry of the Lady Isabel," said Catesby, with his bland, false smile.

"Methinks rather that the lordships of Salisbury (and this is the chief) pass to the Lady Anne," said Richard, musingly. "No, Edward were imprudent to suffer this stronghold to fall to the next heir to his throne. Marked you the Lady Anne—her beauty is most excellent."

"Truly, your highness," answered Catesby, unsuspiciously, "the Lady Isabel seems to me the taller and the statelier."

"When man's merit and woman's beauty are measured by the ell, Catesby, Anne will certainly be less fair than Isabel, and Richard a dolt compared to Clarence. Open the casement—my dressing-robe—good night to you!"

CHAPTER III

THE SISTERS

The next morning, at an hour when modern beauty falls into its first sickly sleep, Isabel and Anne conversed on the same terrace, and near the same spot which had witnessed their father's meditations the day before. They were seated on a rude bench in an angle of the wall, flanked by a low, heavy bastion. And from the parapet their gaze might have wandered over a goodly sight, for on a broad space, covered with sand and sawdust, within the vast limits of the castle range, the numerous knights, and youths who sought apprenticeship in arms and gallantry under the earl, were engaged in those martial sports which, falling elsewhere into disuse, the Last of the Barons kinglily maintained. There, boys of fourteen, on their small horses, ran against each other with blunted lances. There, those of more advanced adolescence, each following the other in a circle, rode at the ring; sometimes (at the word of command from an old knight who had fought at Agincourt, and was the preceptor in these valiant studies) leaping from their horses at full speed, and again vaulting into the saddle. A few grim old warriors sat by to censure or applaud. Most skilled among the younger, was the son of the Lord Montagu; among the maturer, the name of Marmaduke Nevile was the most often shouted. If the eye turned to the left, through the barbican might be seen flocks of beeves entering to supply the mighty larder; and at a smaller postern, a dark crowd of mendicant friars, and the more destitute poor, waited for the daily crumbs from the rich

man's table. What need of a poor-law then! the baron and the abbot made the parish! But not on these evidences of wealth and state turned the eyes—so familiar to them, that they woke no vanity, and roused no pride.

With downcast looks and a pouting lip, Isabel listened to the silver voice of Anne.

"Dear sister, be just to Clarence. He cannot openly defy his king and brother. Believe that he would have accompanied our uncle and cousin had he not deemed that their mediation would be more welcome, at least to King Edward, without his presence."

"But not a letter—not a line!"

"Yet when I think of it, Isabel, are we sure that he even knew of the visit of the archbishop and his brother?"

"How could he fail to know?"

"The Duke of Gloucester, last evening, told me that the king had sent him southward."

"Was it about Clarence that the duke whispered to thee so softly by the oriel window?"

"Surely, yes!" said Anne, simply. "Was not Richard as a brother to us when we played as children on yon greensward?"

"Never as a brother to me—never was Richard of Gloucester one whom I could think of without fear, and even loathing," answered Isabel, quickly.

It was at this turn in the conversation that the noiseless step of Richard himself neared the spot, and hearing his own name thus discourteously treated, he paused, screened from their eyes by the bastion, in the angle.

"Nay, nay, sister," said Anne; "what is there in Richard that misbeseems his princely birth?"

"I know not, but there is no youth in his eye and in

his heart. Even as a child he had the hard will and the cold craft of grey hairs. Pray St. Mary you give me not Gloucester for a brother!"

Anne sighed and smiled—"Ah no," she said, after a short pause—"When thou art Princess of Clarence, may I——"

"May thou, what?"

"Pray for thee and thine in the house of God! Ah! thou knowest not, sweet Isabel, how often at morn and eve mine eyes and heart turn to the spires of yonder convent!" She rose as she said this, her lip quivered, and she moved on in the opposite direction to that in which Richard stood, still unseen, and no longer within his hearing. Isabel rose also, and hastening after her, threw her arms round Anne's neck, and kissed away the tears that stood in those meek eyes.

"My sister—my Anne! Ah! trust in me, thou hast some secret, I know it well—I have long seen it. Is it possible that thou canst have placed thy heart, thy pure love—thou blushest! Ah! Anne! Anne! thou canst not have loved beneath thee."

"Nay," said Anne, with a spark of her ancestral fire lighting her meek eyes through its tears, "not beneath me, but above. What do I say! Isabel, ask me no more. Enough that it is a folly—a dream—and that I could smile with pity at myself, to think from what light causes love and grief can spring."

"Above thee!" repeated Isabel, in amaze, "and who in England is above the daughter of Earl Warwick? Not Richard of Gloucester? if so, pardon my foolish tongue."

"No, not Richard—though I feel kindly towards him, and his sweet voice soothes me when I listen—not Richard. Ask no more."

"Oh, Anne—speak—speak!—we are not both so wretched. Thou lovest not Clarence? It is—it must be!"

"Canst thou think me so false and treacherous—a heart pledged to thee? Clarence! Oh no!"

"But who then—who then?" said Isabel, still suspiciously; "nay, if thou wilt not speak, blame thyself if I must still wrong thee."

Thus appealed to, and wounded to the quick by Isabel's tone and eye, Anne at last, with a strong effort, suppressed her tears, and, taking her sister's hand, said in a voice of touching solemnity—"Promise, then, that the secret shall be ever holy; and, since I know that it will move thine anger, perhaps thy scorn—strive to forget what I will confess to thee."

Isabel for answer pressed her lips on the hand she held; and the sisters, turning under the shadow of a long row of venerable oaks, placed themselves on a little mound, fragrant with the violets of spring. A different part of the landscape beyond was now brought in view;—calmly slept in the valley the roofs of the subject town of Middleham—calmly flowed through the pastures the noiseless waves of Ure. Leaning on Isabel's bosom, Anne thus spake, "Call to mind, sweet sister, that short breathing-time in the horrors of the Civil War, when a brief peace was made between our father and Queen Margaret. We were left in the palace—mere children that we were—to play with the young prince, and the children in Margaret's train."

"I remember."

"And I was unwell, and timid, and kept aloof from the sports with a girl of my own years, whom I think—see how faithful my memory!—they called Sibyll; and Prince Edward, Henry's son, stealing from the

rest, sought me out; and we sat together, or walked together alone, apart from all, that day and the few days we were his mother's guests. Oh! if you could have seen him and heard him then—so beautiful, so gentle, so wise beyond his years, and yet so sweetly sad; and when we parted, he bade me ever love him, and placed his ring on my finger, and wept,—as we kissed each other, as children will."

"Children!—ye were infants!" exclaimed Isabel, whose wonder seemed increased by this simple tale.

"Infant though I was, I felt as if my heart would break when I left him; and then the wars ensued; and do you not remember how ill I was, and like to die, when our house triumphed, and the prince and heir of Lancaster was driven into friendless exile? From that hour my fate was fixed. Smile if you please at such infant folly, but children often feel more deeply than later years can weet of."

"My sister, this is indeed a wilful invention of sorrow for thine own scourge. Why, ere this, believe me, the boy-prince hath forgotten thy very name."

"Not so, Isabel," said Anne, colouring, and quickly, "and perchance, did all rest here, I might have outgrown my weakness. But last year, when we were at Rouen with my father——"

"Well?"

"One evening on entering my chamber, I found a packet—how left I know not, but the French king and his suite, thou rememberest, made our house almost their home—and in this packet was a picture, and on its back these words, '*Forget not the exile, who remembers thee!*"

"And that picture was Prince Edward's?"

Anne blushed, and her bosom heaved beneath the

slender and high-laced gorget. After a pause, looking round her, she drew forth a small miniature, which lay on the heart that beat thus sadly, and placed it in her sister's hands.

"You see I deceive you not, Isabel. And is not this a fair excuse for——"

She stopped short, her modest nature shrinking from comment upon the mere beauty that might have won the heart.

And fair indeed was the face upon which Isabel gazed admiringly, in spite of the stiff and rude art of the limner; full of the fire and energy which characterised the countenance of the mother, but with a tinge of the same profound and inexpressible melancholy that gave its charm to the pensive features of Henry VI.—a face, indeed, to fascinate a young eye, even if not associated with such remembrances of romance and pity.

Without saying a word, Isabel gave back the picture, but she pressed the hand that took it, and Anne was contented to interpret the silence into sympathy.

"And now you know why I have so often incurred your anger—by compassion for the adherents of Lancaster; and for this, also, Richard of Gloucester hath been endeared to me;—for fierce and stern as he may be called, he hath ever been gentle in his mediation for that unhappy House."

"Because it is his policy to be well with all parties. My poor Anne, I cannot bid you hope; and yet, should I ever wed with Clarence, it may be possible—that—that—but you in turn will chide me for ambition."

"How?"

"Clarence is heir to the throne of England, for King Edward has no male children; and the hour may ar-

rive when the son of Henry of Windsor may return to his native land, not as sovereign, but as Duke of Lancaster, and thy hand may reconcile him to the loss of a crown."

"Would love reconcile thee to such a loss, proud Isabel?", said Anne, shaking her head and smiling mournfully.

"No," answered Isabel, emphatically.

"And are men less haught than we?" said Anne. "Ah! I know not if I could love him so well could he resign his rights, or even could he regain them. It is his position that gives him a holiness in my eyes. And this love, that must be hopeless, is half pity and half respect."

At this moment a loud shout arose from the youths in the yard, or sporting-ground, below, and the sisters, startled, and looking up, saw that the sound was occasioned by the sight of the young Duke of Gloucester, who was standing on the parapet near the bench the demoiselles had quitted, and who acknowledged the greeting by a wave of his plumed cap and a lowly bend of his head; at the same time the figures of Warwick and the archbishop, seemingly in earnest conversation, appeared at the end of the terrace. The sisters rose hastily, and would have stolen away, but the archbishop caught a glimpse of their robes, and called aloud to them. The reverent obedience, at that day, of youth to relations, left the sisters no option but to advance towards their uncle, which they did with demure reluctance.

"Fair brother," said the archbishop, "I would that Gloucester were to have my stately niece instead of the gaudy Clarence."

"Wherefore?"

"Because he can protect those he loves, and Clarence will ever need a protector."

"I like George not the less for that," said Warwick, "for I would not have my son-in-law my master."

"Master!" echoed the archbishop, laughing; "the Soldan of Babylon himself, were he your son-in-law, would find Lord Warwick a tolerably stubborn servant!"

"And yet," said Warwick, also laughing, but with a franker tone, "beshrew me, but much as I approve young Gloucester, and deem him the hope of the house of York, I never feel sure, when we are of the same mind, whether I agree with him, or whether he leadeth me. Ah, George! Isabel should have wedded the king, and then Edward and I would have had a sweet mediator in all our quarrels. But not so hath it been decreed."

There was a pause.

"Note how Gloucester steals to the side of Anne. Thou mayst have him for a son-in-law, though no rival to Clarence. Montagu hath hinted that the duke so aspires."

"He has his father's face—well," said the earl, softly. "But yet," he added, in an altered and reflective tone, "the boy is to me a riddle. That he will be bold in battle and wise in council I foresee; but would he had more of a young man's honest follies! There is a medium between Edward's wantonness and Richard's sanctimony; and he who in the heyday of youth's blood scowls alike upon sparkling wine and smiling woman, may hide in his heart darker and more sinful fancies. But fie on me! I will not wrongfully mistrust his father's son. Thou spokest of Montagu; he seems to have been mighty cold to his brother's

wrongs—ever at the court—ever sleek with Villein and Woodville."

"But the better to watch thy interests;—I so counselled him."

"A priest's counsel! Hate frankly or love freely is a knight's and soldier's motto. A murrain on all double-dealing!"

The archbishop shrugged his shoulders, and applied to his nostrils a small pouncet-box of dainty essences.

"Come hither, my haughty Isabel," said the prelate, as the demoiselles now drew near. He placed his niece's arm within his own, and took her aside to talk of Clarence; Richard remained with Anne, and the young cousins were joined by Warwick. The earl noted in silence the soft address of the eloquent prince, and his evident desire to please Anne. And strange as it may seem, although he hitherto regarded Richard with admiration and affection, and although his pride for both daughters coveted alliances not less than royal, yet, in contemplating Gloucester for the first time as a probable suitor to his daughter (and his favourite daughter), the anxiety of a father sharpened his penetration, and placed the character of Richard before him in a different point from that in which he had hitherto looked only on the fearless heart and accomplished wit of his royal godson.

CHAPTER IV

THE DESTRIER

It was three days afterwards that the earl, as, according to custom, Anne knelt to him for his morning blessing in the oratory where the Christian baron at matins and vespers offered up his simple worship, drew her forth into the air, and said abruptly—

"Wouldst thou be happy if Richard of Gloucester were thy betrothed!"

Anne started, and with more vivacity than usually belonged to her, exclaimed, "Oh no, my father!"

"This is no maiden's silly coyness, Anne? It is a plain yea or nay that I ask from thee!"

"Nay, then," answered Anne, encouraged by her father's tone—"nay, if it so please you."

"It doth please me," said the earl, shortly; and after a pause, he added, "Yes, I am well pleased. Richard gives promise of an illustrious manhood; but, Anne, thou growest so like thy mother, that whenever my pride seeks to see thee great, my heart steps in, and only prays that it may see thee happy!—so much so, that I would not have given thee to Clarence, whom it likes me well to view as Isabel's betrothed, for, to her, greatness and bliss are one! and she is of firm nature, and can rule in her own house; but thou,—where out of romaunt can I find a lord loving enough for thee, soft child?"

Inexpressibly affected, Anne threw herself on her father's breast and wept. He caressed and soothed her fondly; and, before her emotion was well over, Gloucester and Isabel joined them.

"My fair cousin," said the duke, "hath promised to show me thy renowned steed, Saladin; and since, on quitting thy halls, I go to my apprenticeship in war on the turbulent Scottish frontier, I would fain ask thee for a destrier of the same race as that which bears the thunderbolt of Warwick's wrath through the storm of battle."

"A steed of the race of Saladin," answered the earl, leading the way to the destrier's stall, apart from all other horses, and rather a chamber of the castle than a stable, "were indeed a boon worthy a soldier's gift and a prince's asking. But, alas! Saladin, like myself, is sonless—the last of a long line."

"His father, methinks, fell for us on the field of Touton. Was it not so? I have heard Edward say, that when the archers gave way, and the victory more than wavered, thou, dismounting, didst slay thy steed with thine own hand, and kissing the cross of thy sword, swore, on that spot, to stem the rush of the foe, and win Edward's crown or Warwick's grave." *

"It was so; and the shout of my merry men, when they saw me amongst their ranks on foot—all flight forbid—was Malech's death-dirge! It is a wondrous race that of Malech and his son Saladin [continued the earl, smiling]. When my ancestor, Aymer de Nevile, led his troops to the Holy Land, under Cœur de Lion, it was his fate to capture a lady beloved by the mighty Saladin. Need I say that Aymer, under a flag of truce, escorted her ransomless, her veil never

* "Every Palm Sunday, the day on which the battle of Touton was fought, a rough figure, called the Red Horse, on the side of a hill in Warwickshire, is scoured out. This is suggested to be done in commemoration of the horse which the Earl of Warwick slew on that day, determined to vanquish or die."—Roberts's "York and Lancaster," vol. i. p. 429.

raised from her face, to the tent of the Saracen king. Saladin, too gracious for an infidel, made him tarry awhile, an honoured guest; and Aymer's chivalry became sorely tried, for the lady he had delivered loved and tempted him; but the good knight prayed and fasted, and defied Satan and all his works. The lady (so runs the legend) grew wroth at the pious crusader's disdainful coldness; and when Aymer returned to his comrades, she sent, amidst the gifts of the soldan, two coal-black steeds, male and mare, over which some foul and weird spells had been duly muttered. Their beauty, speed, art, and fierceness, were a marvel. And Aymer, unsuspecting, prized the boon, and selected the male destrier for his war-horse. Great were the feats, in many a field, which my forefather wrought, bestriding his black charger. But one fatal day, on which the sudden war-trump made him forget his morning ave, the beast had power over the Christian, and bore him, against bit and spur, into the thickest of the foe. He did all a knight can do against many (pardon his descendant's vaunting,—so runs the tale)—and the Christians for a while beheld him solitary in the *mêlée,* mowing down moon and turban. Then the crowd closed, and the good knight was lost to sight. 'To the rescue!' cried bold King Richard, and on rushed the crusaders to Aymer's help; when lo! and suddenly the ranks severed, and the black steed emerged! Aymer still on the selle, but motionless, and his helm battered and plumeless—his brand broken—his arm drooping. On came man and horse, on—charging on, not against Infidel, but Christian. On dashed the steed, I say, with fire bursting from eyes and nostrils, and the pike of his chaffron bent lance-like against the crusaders' van. The foul fiend seemed to

be in the destrier's rage and puissance. He bore right against Richard's standard-bearer, and down went the lion and the cross. He charged the king himself; and Richard, unwilling to harm his own dear soldier Aymer, halted wondering, till the pike of the destrier pierced his own charger through the barding, and the king lay rolling in the dust. A panic seized the crossmen—they fled—the Saracens pursued—and still with the Saracens came the black steed and the powerless rider. At last, when the crusaders reached the camp, and the flight ceased, there halted, also, Aymer. Not a man dared near him. He spoke not—none spoke to him—till a holy priest and palmer approached and sprinkled the good knight and the black barb with holy water, and exorcised both; the spell broke, and Aymer dropped to the earth. They unbraced his helm—he was cold and stark. The fierce steed had but borne a dead man."

"Holy Paul!" cried Gloucester, with seeming sanctimony, though a covert sneer played round the firm beauty of his pale lips—"a notable tale, and one that proveth much of Sacred Truth, now lightly heeded. But, verily, lord earl, I should have little loved a steed with such a pedigree."

"Hear the rest," said Isabel—"King Richard ordered the destrier to be slain forthwith; but the holy palmer who had exorcised it, forbade the sacrifice. 'Mighty shall be the service,' said the reverend man, 'which the posterity of this steed shall render to thy royal race, and great glory shall they give to the sons of Nevile. Let the war-horse, now duly exorcised from infidel spells, live long to bear a Christian warrior!'"

"And so," quoth the earl, taking up the tale—"so mare and horse were brought by Aymer's squires to his

English hall; and Aymer's son, Sir Reginald, bore the cross, and bestrode the fatal steed, without fear and without scathe. From that hour the house of Nevile rose amain, in fame and in puissance; and the legend further saith, that the same palmer encountered Sir Reginald at Joppa, bade him treasure that race of war-steeds as his dearest heritage, for with that race his own should flourish and depart; and the sole one of the Infidel's spells which could not be broken, was that which united the gift—generation after generation, for weal or for woe, for honour or for doom—to the fate of Aymer and his house. 'And,' added the palmer, 'as with woman's love and woman's craft was woven the indissoluble charm, so shall woman, whether in craft or in love, ever shape the fortunes of thee and thine.'"

"As yet," said the prince, "the prophecy is fulfilled in a golden sense, for nearly all thy wide baronies, I trow, have come to thee through the female side. A woman's hand brought to the Nevile, this castle and its lands.* From a woman came the heritage of Monthermer and Montagu, and Salisbury's famous earldom;—and the dower of thy peerless countess was the broad domains of Beauchamp."

"And a woman's craft, young prince, wrought my king's displeasure! But enough of these dissour's tales: behold the son of poor Malech, whom, forgetting all such legends, I slew at Touton. Ho, Saladin—great thy master!"

* Middleham Castle was built by Robert Fitz Ranulph, grandson of Ribald, younger brother of the Earl of Bretagne and Richmond, nephew to the Conqueror. The founder's line failed in male heirs, and the heiress married Robert Nevile, son of Lord Raby. Warwick's father held the earldom of Salisbury in right of his wife, the heiress of Thomas de Montacute.

They stood now in the black steed's stall—an ample and high-vaulted space, for halter never insulted the fierce destrier's mighty neck, which the God of Battles had clothed in thunder. A marble cistern contained his limpid drink, and in a gilded manger the finest wheaten bread was mingled with the oats of Flanders. On entering, they found young George, Montagu's son, with two or three boys, playing familiarly with the noble animal, who had all the affectionate docility inherited from an Arab origin. But at the sound of Warwick's voice, its ears rose, its mane dressed itself, and with a short neigh it came to his feet, and kneeling down, in slow and stately grace, licked its master's hand. So perfect and so matchless a steed never had knight bestrode! Its hide without one white hair, and glossy as the sheenest satin; a lady's tresses were scarcely finer than the hair of its noble mane; the exceeding smallness of its head, its broad frontal, the remarkable and almost human intelligence of its eye, seemed actually to elevate its conformation above that of its species. Though the race had increased, generation after generation, in size and strength, Prince Richard still marvelled (when, obedient to a sign from Warwick, the destrier rose, and leant its head, with a sort of melancholy and quiet tenderness, upon the earl's shoulder) that a horse less in height and bulk than the ordinary battle-steed, could bear the vast weight of the giant earl in his ponderous mail. But his surprise ceased when the earl pointed out to him the immense strength of the steed's ample loins, the sinewy cleanness, the iron muscle, of the stag-like legs, the bull-like breadth of chest, and the swelling power of the shining neck.

"And after all," added the earl, "both in man and

beast, the spirit and the race, not the stature and the bulk, bring the prize. Mort Dieu, Richard! it often shames me of mine own thews and broad breast—I had been more vain of laurels had I been shorter by the head!"

"Nevertheless," said young George of Montagu, with a page's pertness, "I had rather have thine inches than Prince Richard's, and thy broad breast than his grace's short neck."

The Duke of Gloucester turned as if a snake had stung him. He gave but one glance to the speaker, but that glance lived for ever in the boy's remembrance, and the young Montagu turned pale and trembled, even before he heard the earl's stern rebuke.

"Young magpies chatter, boy—young eagles in silence measure the space between the eyrie and the sun!"

The boy hung his head, and would have slunk off, but Richard detained him with a gentle hand—"My fair young cousin," said he, "thy words gall no sore, and if ever thou and I charge side by side into the foeman's ranks, thou shalt comprehend what thy uncle designed to say,—how, in the hour of strait and need, we measure men's stature not by the body but the soul!"

"A noble answer," whispered Anne, with something like sisterly admiration.

"Too noble," said the more ambitious Isabel, in the same voice, "for Clarence's future wife not to fear Clarence's dauntless brother."

"And so," said the prince, quitting the stall with Warwick, while the girls still lingered behind, "so Saladin hath no son! Wherefore? Can you mate him with no bride?"

"Faith," answered the earl, "the females of his race

sleep in yonder dell, their burial-place, and the proud beast disdains all meaner loves. Nay, were it not so, to continue the breed, if adulterated, were but to mar it."

"You care little for the legend, meseems."

"Pardieu! at times, yes, over much; but in sober moments, I think that the brave man who does his duty lacks no wizard prophecy to fulfil his doom; and whether in prayer or in death, in fortune or defeat, his soul goes straight to God!"

"Umph," said Richard, musingly; and there was a pause.

"Warwick," resumed the prince, "doubtless, even on your return to London, the queen's enmity and her mother's will not cease. Clarence loves Isabel, but Clarence knows not how to persuade the king and rule the king's womankind. Thou knowest how I have stood aloof from all the factions of the court. Unhappily I go to the borders, and can but slightly serve thee. But——" (he stopped short, and sighed heavily).

"Speak on, prince."

"In a word, then, if I were thy son, Anne's husband —I see—I see—I see—" (thrice repeated the prince, with a vague dreaminess in his eye, and stretching forth his hand)—"a future that might defy all foes, opening to me and thee!"

Warwick hesitated in some embarrassment.

"My gracious and princely cousin," he said at length, "this proffer is indeed sweet incense to a father's pride. But pardon me, as yet, noble Richard, thou art so young that the king and the world would blame me did I suffer my ambition to listen to such temptation. Enough, at present, if all disputes between

our house and the king can be smoothed and laid at rest, without provoking new ones. Nay, pardon me, prince, let this matter cease—at least, till thy return from the borders."

"May I take with me hope?"

"Nay," said Warwick, "thou knowest that I am a plain man; to bid thee hope, were to plight my word. And," he added, seriously, "there be reasons grave, and well to be considered, why both the daughters of a subject should not wed with their king's brothers. Let this cease now, I pray thee, sweet lord."

Here the demoiselles joined their father, and the conference was over; but when Richard, an hour after, stood musing alone on the battlements, he muttered to himself—"Thou art a fool, stout earl, not to have welcomed the union between thy power and my wit. Thou goest to a court where, without wit, power is nought. Who may foresee the future? Marry, that was a wise ancient fable, that he who seized and bound Proteus, could extract from the changeful god the prophecy of the days to come. Yea! the man who can seize Fate, can hear its voice predict to him. And by my own heart and brain, which never yet relinquished what affection yearned for, or thought aspired to, I read, as in a book, Anne, that thou shalt be mine; and that where wave on yon battlements the ensigns of Beauchamp, Monthermer, and Nevile, the Boar of Gloucester shall liege it over their broad baronies and hardy vassals."

BOOK VI

HEREIN ARE OPENED SOME GLIMPSES OF THE FATE, BELOW, THAT ATTENDS THOSE WHO ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, AND THOSE WHO DESIRE TO MAKE OTHERS BETTER. LOVE, DEMAGOGUY, AND SCIENCE ALL EQUALLY OFFSPRING OF THE SAME PROLIFIC DELUSION—VIZ., THAT MEAN SOULS (THE EARTH'S MAJORITY) ARE WORTH THE HOPE AND THE AGONY OF NOBLE SOULS, THE EVERLASTINGLY SUFFERING AND ASPIRING FEW

CHAPTER I

NEW DISSENSIONS

We must pass over some months. Warwick and his family had returned to London, and the meeting between Edward and the earl had been cordial and affectionate. Warwick was reinstated in the offices which gave him apparently the supreme rule in England. The Princess Margaret had left England, as the bride of Charles the Bold; and the earl had attended the procession, in honour of her nuptials. The king, agreeably with the martial objects he had had long at heart, had then declared war on Louis XI., and parliament was addressed, and troops were raised for that impolitic purpose.* To this war, however, Warwick

* "Parliamentary Rolls," 623. The fact in the text has been neglected by most historians.

was inflexibly opposed. He pointed out the madness of withdrawing from England all her best affected chivalry, at a time when the adherents of Lancaster, still powerful, would require no happier occasion to raise the Red Rose banner. He showed how hollow was the hope of steady aid from the hot, but reckless and unprincipled Duke of Burgundy, and how different now was the condition of France under a king of consummate sagacity, and with an overflowing treasury, to its distracted state in the former conquests of the English. This opposition to the king's will gave every opportunity for Warwick's enemies to renew their old accusation of secret and treasonable amity with Louis. Although the proud and hasty earl had not only forgiven the affront put upon him by Edward, but had sought to make amends for his own intemperate resentment, by public attendance on the ceremonials that accompanied the betrothal of the princess, it was impossible for Edward ever again to love the minister who had defied his power, and menaced his crown. His humour and his suspicions broke forth despite the restraint that policy dictated to him: and in the disputes upon the invasion of France, a second and more deadly breach between Edward and his minister must have yawned, had not events suddenly and unexpectedly proved the wisdom of Warwick's distrust of Burgundy. Louis XI. bought off the Duke of Bretagne, patched up a peace with Charles the Bold, and thus frustrated all the schemes and broke all the alliances of Edward at the very moment his military preparations were ripe.*

Still the angry feelings that the dispute had occasioned between Edward and the earl were not removed with the cause; and, under pretence of guarding

* W. Wyr, 518.

against hostilities from Louis, the king requested Warwick to depart to his government of Calais, the most important and honourable post, it is true, which a subject could then hold: but Warwick considered the request as a pretext for his removal from the court. A yet more irritating and insulting cause of offence was found in Edward's withholding his consent to Clarence's often-urged demand for permission to wed with the Lady Isabel. It is true that this refusal was accompanied with the most courteous protestations of respect for the earl, and placed only upon the general ground of state policy.

"My dear George," Edward would say, "the heiress of Lord Warwick is certainly no mal-alliance for a king's brother; but the safety of the throne imperatively demands, that my brothers should strengthen my rule, by connections with foreign potentates. I, it is true, married a subject, and see all the troubles that have sprung from my boyish passion! No, no! Go to Bretagne. The duke hath a fair daughter, and we will make up for any scantiness in the dower. Weary me no more, George. *Fiat voluntas mea!*"

But the motives assigned were not those which influenced the king's refusal. Reasonably enough, he dreaded that the next male heir to his crown should wed the daughter of the subject who had given that crown, and might at any time take it away. He knew Clarence to be giddy, unprincipled, and vain. Edward's faith in Warwick was shaken by the continual and artful representations of the queen and her family. He felt that the alliance between Clarence and the earl would be the union of two interests, almost irresistible, if once arrayed against his own.

But Warwick, who penetrated into the true reasons

for Edward's obstinacy, was yet more resentful against the reasons than the obstinacy itself. The one galled him through his affections, the other through his pride; and the first were as keen as the last was morbid. He was the more chafed, inasmuch as his anxiety of father became aroused. Isabel was really attached to Clarence, who, with all his errors, possessed every superficial attraction that graced his house; gallant and handsome, gay and joyous, and with manners that made him no less popular than Edward himself.

And if Isabel's affections were not deep, disinterested, and tender, like those of Anne, they were strengthened by a pride which she inherited from her father, and a vanity which she took from her sex. It was galling in the extreme to feel that the loves between her and Clarence were the court gossip, and the king's refusal the court jest. Her health gave way, and pride and love both gnawed at her heart.

It happened, unfortunately for the king and for Warwick, that Gloucester, whose premature acuteness and sagacity would have the more served both, inasmuch as the views he had formed in regard to Anne would have blended his interest, in some degree, with that of the Duke of Clarence, and certainly with the object of conciliation between Edward and his minister,—it happened, we say, unfortunately, that Gloucester was still absent with the forces employed on the Scottish frontier, whither he had repaired on quitting Middleham, and where his extraordinary military talents found their first brilliant opening,—and he was therefore absent from London during all the disgusts he might have removed, and the intrigues he might have frustrated.

But the interests of the House of Warwick, during

the earl's sullen and indignant sojourn at his government of Calais, were not committed to unskilful hands; and Montagu and the archbishop were well fitted to cope with Lord Rivers and the Duchess of Bedford.

Between these able brothers, one day, at the More, an important conference took place.

"I have sought you," said Montagu, with more than usual care upon his brow—"I have sought you in consequence of an event that may lead to issues of no small moment, whether for good or evil. Clarence has suddenly left England for Calais."

"I know it, Montagu; the Duke confided to me his resolution to proclaim himself old enough to marry—and discreet enough to choose for himself."

"And you approved?"

"Certes; and, sooth to say, I brought him to that modest opinion of his own capacities. What is more still, I propose to join him at Calais!"

"George!"

"Look not so scared, O valiant captain, who never lost a battle—where the church meddles, all prospers. Listen!" And the young prelate gathered himself up from his listless posture, and spoke with earnest unction—"Thou knowest that I do not much busy myself in lay schemes—when I do, the object must be great. Now, Montagu, I have of late narrowly and keenly watched that spidery web which ye call a court, and I see that the spider will devour the wasp, unless the wasp boldly break the web—for woman-craft I call the spider, and soldier-pride I style the wasp. To speak plainly, these Woodvilles must be bravely breasted and determinately abashed. I do not mean that we can deal with the king's wife and her family as with any other foes; but we must convince them that they cannot

cope with us, and that their interests will best consist in acquiescing to that condition of things which places the rule of England in the hands of the Neviles."

"My own thought, if I saw the way!"

"I see the way in this alliance; the Houses of York and Warwick must become so indissolubly united, that an attempt to injure the one, must destroy both. The queen and the Woodvilles plot against us; we must raise in the king's family a counterpoise to their machinations. It brings no scandal on the queen to conspire against Warwick, but it would ruin her in the eyes of England to conspire against the king's brother; and Clarence and Warwick must be as one. This is not all! If our sole aid was in giddy George, we should but buttress our house with a weathercock. This connection is but as a part of the grand scheme on which I have set my heart—Clarence shall wed Isabel, Gloucester wed Anne, and (let thy ambitious heart beat high, Montagu) the king's eldest daughter shall wed thy son—the male representative of our triple honours. Ah, thine eyes sparkle now! Thus the whole royalty of England shall centre in the Houses of Nevile and York; and the Woodvilles will be caught and hampered in their own meshes—their resentment impotent; for how can Elizabeth stir against us, if her daughter be betrothed to the son of Montagu, the nephew of Warwick? Clarence, beloved by the shallow commons;* Gloucester, adored both by the army and the church; and Montagu and Warwick, the two great captains of the age—is not this a combination of power, that may defy Fate?"

* Singular as it may seem to those who know not that popularity is given to the vulgar qualities of men, and that where a noble nature becomes popular (a rare occurrence), it is despite the nobleness—not because of it. Clarence was a popular idol even to the time of his death.—*Croyl.*, 562.

"Oh, George!" said Montagu, admiringly, "what pity that the church should spoil such a statesman!"

"Thou art profane, Montagu; the church spoils no man—the church leads and guides ye all; and, mark, I look farther still. I would have intimate league with France: I would strengthen ourselves with Spain and the German Emperor; I would buy, or seduce the votes of the sacred college; I would have thy poor brother, whom thou so pitiest because he has no son to marry a king's daughter—no daughter to wed with a king's son—I would have thy unworthy brother, Montagu, the father of the whole Christian world, and, from the chair of the Vatican, watch over the weal of kingdoms. And now, seest thou why with to-morrow's sun I depart for Calais, and lend my voice in aid of Clarence's, for the first knot in this complicated bond?"

"But, will Warwick consent while the king opposes? Will his pride——"

"His pride serves us here; for, so long as Clarence did not dare to gainsay the king, Warwick, in truth, might well disdain to press his daughter's hand upon living man. The king opposes, but with what right? Warwick's pride will but lead him, if well addressed, to defy affront, and to resist dictation. Besides, our brother has a woman's heart for his children; and Isabel's face is pale, and that will plead more than all my eloquence."

"But can the king forgive your intercession, and Warwick's contumacy?"

"Forgive!—the marriage once over, what is left for him to do? He is then one with us, and when Gloucester returns all will be smooth again—smooth for the second and more important nuptials—and the second shall preface the third; meanwhile, you return to the

court. To these ceremonials you need be no party: keep but thy handsome son from breaking his neck in over-riding his hobby, and 'bide thy time!'"

Agreeably with the selfish, but sagacious policy, thus detailed, the prelate departed the next day for Calais, where Clarence was already urging his suit with the ardent impatience of amorous youth. The archbishop found, however, that Warwick was more reluctant than he had anticipated to suffer his daughter to enter any house without the consent of its chief, nor would the earl, in all probability, have acceded to the prayers of the princely suitor, had not Edward, enraged at the flight of Clarence, and worked upon by the artful queen, committed the imprudence of writing an intemperate and menacing letter to the earl, which called up all the passions of the haughty Warwick.

"What!" he exclaimed, "thinks this ungrateful man not only to dishonour me, by his method of marrying his sisters, but will he also play the tyrant with me in the disposal of mine own daughter! He threats! he!—enough. It is due to me to show that there lives no man whose threats I have not the heart to defy!" And the prelate, finding him in this mood, had no longer any difficulty in winning his consent. This ill-omened marriage was, accordingly, celebrated with great and regal pomp at Calais, and the first object of the archbishop was attained.

While thus stood affairs between the two great factions of the state, those discontents which Warwick's presence at court had awhile laid at rest, again spread, broad and far, throughout the land. The luxury and indolence of Edward's disposition, in ordinary times, always surrendered him to the guidance of others. In the commencement of his reign he was emi-

nently popular, and his government, though stern, suited to the times; for then the presiding influence was that of Lord Warwick. As the queen's counsels prevailed over the consummate experience and masculine vigour of the earl, the king's government lost both popularity and respect, except only in the metropolis; and if, at the close of his reign, it regained all its earlier favour with the people, it must be principally ascribed to the genius of Hastings, then England's most powerful subject, and whose intellect calmly moved all the springs of action. But now everywhere the royal authority was weakened; and while Edward was feasting at Shene, and Warwick absent at Calais, the provinces were exposed to all the abuses which most gall a population. The poor complained that undue exactions were made on them by the hospitals, abbeys, and barons; the church complained that the queen's relations had seized and spent church moneys; the men of birth and merit complained of the advancement of new men who had done no service; and all these several discontents fastened themselves upon the odious Woodvilles, as the cause of all. The second breach, now notorious, between the king and the all-beloved Warwick, was a new aggravation of the popular hatred to the queen's family, and seemed to give occasion for the malcontents to appear with impunity, at least so far as the earl was concerned: it was, then, at this critical time that the circumstances we are about to relate occurred.

CHAPTER II

THE WOULD-BE IMPROVERS OF JOVE'S FOOT-BALL, EARTH —THE SAD FATHER AND THE SAD CHILD—THE FAIR RIVALS

Adam Warner was at work on his crucible when the servitor commissioned to attend him opened the chamber door, and a man dressed in the black gown of a student entered.

He approached the alchemist, and after surveying him for a moment in a silence that seemed not without contempt, said "What, Master Warner, are you so wedded to your new studies that you have not a word to bestow on an old friend?"

Adam turned, and after peevishly gazing at the intruder a few moments, his face brightened up into recognition.

"*En iterum!*" he said. "Again, bold Robin Hilyard, and in a scholar's garb. Ha! doubtless thou hast learned ere this that peaceful studies do best ensure man's weal below, and art come to labour with me in the high craft of mind-work!"

"Adam," quoth Hilyard, "ere I answer, tell me this —Thou, with thy science wouldst change the world,—art thou a jot nearer to thy end?"

"Well-a-day," said poor Adam, "you know little what I have undergone. For danger to myself by rack and gibbet I say nought. Man's body is fair prey to cruelty, and what a king spares to-day the worm shall gnaw to-morrow. But mine invention—my Eureka—look!" and stepping aside, he lifted a cloth, and exhibited the mangled remains of the unhappy model.

"I am forbid to restore it," continued Adam, dolefully. "I must work day and night to make gold, and the gold comes not: and my only change of toil is when the queen bids me construct little puppet-boxes for her children! How, then, can I change the world? And thou," he added, doubtingly and eagerly—"thou, with thy plots and stratagem, and active demagoguy, thinkest thou that *thou* hast changed the world, or extracted one drop of evil out of the mixture of gall and hyssop which man is born to drink?"

Hilyard was silent, and the two world-betterers—the philosopher and the demagogue—gazed on each other, half in sympathy, half in contempt. At last Robin said—

"Mine old friend, hope sustains us both; and in the wilderness we yet behold the Pisgah! But to my business. Doubtless thou art permitted to visit Henry in his prison."

"Not so," replied Adam; "and for the rest, since I now eat King Edward's bread, and enjoy what they call his protection, ill would it beseem me to lend myself to plots against his throne."

"Ah! man—man—man," exclaimed Hilyard, bitterly, "thou art like all the rest—scholar or serf, the same slave; a king's smile bribes thee from a people's service!"

Before Adam could reply, a panel in the wainscot slid back, and the bald head of a friar peered into the room. "Son Adam," said the holy man, "I crave your company an instant, *oro vestrem aurem;*" and with this abominable piece of Latinity the friar vanished.

With a resigned and mournful shrug of the shoulders, Adam walked across the room, when Hilyard, arresting his progress, said, crossing himself, and in a

subdued and fearful whisper, "Is not that Friar Bungey, the notable magician?"

"Magician or not," answered Warner, with a lip of inexpressible contempt and a heavy sigh, "God pardon his mother for giving birth to such a numbskull!" and with this pious and charitable ejaculation Adam disappeared in the adjoining chamber, appropriated to the friar.

"Hum," soliloquized Hilyard, "they say that Friar Bungey is employed by the witch duchess in everlasting diabolisms against her foes. A peep into his den might suffice me for a stirring tale to the people."

No sooner did this daring desire arise than the hardy Robin resolved to gratify it: and stealing on tiptoe along the wall, he peered cautiously through the aperture made by the sliding panel. An enormous stuffed lizard hung from the ceiling, and various strange reptiles, dried into mummy, were ranged around and glared at the spy with green glass eyes. A huge book lay open on a tripod stand, and a caldron seethed over a slow and dull fire. A sight yet more terrible presently awaited the rash beholder.

"Adam," said the friar, laying his broad palm on the student's reluctant shoulders, "*inter sapentes.*"

"*Sapientes,* brother," groaned Adam.

"That's the old form, Adam," quoth the friar, superciliously—"*sapentes* is the last improvement. I say, between wise men there is no envy. Our noble and puissant patroness, the Duchess of Bedford, hath committed to me a task that promiseth much profit. I have worked at it night and day *stotis filibus.*"

"O, man, what lingo speakest thou?—*stotis filibus!*"

"Tush, if it is not good Latin, it does as well, son Adam. I say I have worked at it night and day, and it

is now advanced eno' for experiment. But thou art going to sleep."

"Despatch—speak out—speak on!" said Adam, desperately—"what is thy achievement?"

"See!" answered the friar, majestically; and drawing aside a black pall, he exhibited to the eyes of Adam, and to the more startled gaze of Robin Hilyard, a pale, cadaverous, corpse-like image, of pigmy proportions, but with features moulded into a coarse caricature of the lordly countenance of the Earl of Warwick.

"There," said the friar, complacently, and rubbing his hands, "that is no piece of bungling, eh! As like the stout earl as one pea to another."

"And for what hast thou kneaded up all this waste of wax?" asked Adam. "Forsooth, I knew not you had so much of ingenious art; algates, the toy is somewhat ghastly."

"Ho, ho!" quoth the friar, laughing so as to show a set of jagged, discoloured fangs from ear to ear, "surely thou, who art so notable a wizard and scholar, knowest for what purpose we image forth our enemies. Whatever the duchess inflicts upon this figure, the Earl of Warwick, whom it representeth, will feel through his bones and marrow—waste wax, waste man!"

"Thou art a devil to do this thing, and a blockhead to think it, O miserable friar!" exclaimed Adam, roused from all his gentleness.

"Ha!" cried the friar, no less vehemently, and his burly face purple with passion, "dost thou think to bandy words with me? Wretch! I will set goblins to pinch thee black and blue. I will drag thee at night over all the jags of Mount Pepanon, at the tail of a mad nightmare. I will put aches in all thy bones, and

the blood in thy veins shall run into sores and blotches. Am I not Friar Bungey? and what art thou?"

At these terrible denunciations, the sturdy Robin, though far less superstitious than most of his contemporaries, was seized with a trembling from head to foot; and expecting to see goblins and imps start forth from the walls, he retired hastily from his hiding-place, and, without waiting for further commune with Warner, softly opened the chamber door and stole down the stairs. Adam, however, bore the storm unquailingly, and when the holy man paused to take breath, he said, calmly—

"Verily, if thou canst do these things, there must be secrets in Nature which I have not yet discovered. Howbeit, though thou art free to try all thou canst against me, thy threats make it necessary that this communication between us should be nailed up, and I shall so order."

The friar, who was ever in want of Adam's aid, either to construe a bit of Latin, or to help him in some chemical illusion, by no means relished this quiet retort; and holding out his huge hand to Adam, said, with affected cordiality—

"Pooh! we are brothers, and must not quarrel. I was over hot, and thou too provoking; but I honour and love thee, man—let it pass. As for this figure, doubtless we might pink it all over, and the earl be never the worse. But if our employers order these things, and pay for them, we cunning men make profit by fools!"

"It is men like thee that bring shame on science," answered Adam, sternly; "and I will not listen to thee longer."

"Nay, but you must," said the friar, clutching

Adam's robe, and concealing his resentment by an affected grin. "Thou thinkest me a mere ignoramus—ha! ha!—I think the same of thee. Why, man, thou hast never studied the parts of the human body, I'll swear."

"I'm no leech," said Adam. "Let me go."

"No—not yet. I will convict thee of ignorance. Thou dost not even know where the liver is placed."

"I do," answered Adam, shortly; "but what then?"

"Thou dost?—I deny it. Here is a pin; stick it into this wax, man, where thou sayest the liver lies in the human frame."

Adam unsuspiciously obeyed.

"Well!—the liver is there, eh. Ah! but where are the lungs?"

"Why, here."

"And the midriff?"

"Here, certes."

"Right!—thou mayest go now," said the friar, drily. Adam disappeared through the aperture, and closed the panel.

"Now I know where the lungs, midriff, and liver are," said the friar to himself, "I shall get on famously. 'Tis a useful fellow, that, or I should have had him hanged long ago!"

Adam did not remark, on his re-entrance, that his visitor, Hilyard, had disappeared, and the philosopher was soon re-immersed in the fiery interest of his thankless labours.

It might be an hour afterwards, when, wearied and exhausted by perpetual hope and perpetual disappointment, he flung himself on his seat; and that deep sadness, which they who devote themselves in this noisy world to wisdom and to truth alone can know—suf-

fused his thoughts, and murmured from his feverish lips.

"Oh, hard condition of my life!" groaned the sage —"ever to strive, and never to accomplish. The sun sets and the sun rises upon my eternal toils, and my age stands as distant from the goal, as stood my youth! Fast, fast the mind is wearing out the frame, and my schemes have but woven the ropes of sand, and my name shall be writ in water. Golden dreams of my young hope, where are ye? Methought once, that could I obtain the grace of royalty, the ear of power, the command of wealth, my path to glory was made smooth and sure—I should become the grand inventor of my time and land; I should leave my lore a heritage and blessing wherever labour works to civilise the round globe. And now my lodging is a palace—royalty my patron—they give me gold at my desire—my wants no longer mar my leisure. Well, and for what? On condition that I forego the sole task for which patronage, wealth, and leisure were desired! There stands the broken iron, and there simmers the ore I am to turn to gold—the iron worth more than all the gold, and the gold, never to be won! Poor, I was an inventor, a creator, a true magician—protected, patronised, enriched, I am but the alchemist, the bubble, the dupe or duper, the fool's fool. God, brace up my limbs! Let me escape—give me back my old dream, and die at least, if accomplishing nothing, hoping all!"

He rose as he spoke; he strode across the chamber with majestic step, with resolve upon his brow. He stopped short, for a sharp pain shot across his heart. Premature age, and the disease that labour brings, were at their work of decay within: the mind's excite-

ment gave way to the body's weakness, and he sank again upon his seat, breathing hard, gasping, pale, the icy damps upon his brow. Bubblingly seethed the molten metals, redly glowed the poisonous charcoal, the air of death was hot within the chamber where the victim of royal will pandered to the desire of gold. Terrible and eternal moral for Wisdom and for Avarice, for sages and for kings—ever shall he who would be the maker of gold, breathe the air of death!

"Father," said the low and touching voice of one who had entered unperceived, and who now threw her arms round Adam's neck, "father, thou art ill, and sorely suffering——"

"At heart—yes, Sibyll. Give me thine arm; let us forth and taste the fresher air."

It was so seldom that Warner could be induced to quit his chamber, that these words almost startled Sibyll, and she looked anxiously in his face, as she wiped the dews from his forehead.

"Yes—air—air!" repeated Adam, rising.

Sibyll placed his bonnet over his silvered locks, drew his gown more closely round him, and slowly, and in silence, they left the chamber, and took their way across the court to the ramparts of the fortress-palace.

The day was calm and genial, with a low but fresh breeze stirring gently through the warmth of noon. The father and child seated themselves on the parapet, and saw, below, the gay and numerous vessels that glided over the sparkling river, while the dark walls of Baynard's Castle, the adjoining bulwark and battlements of Montfichet, and the tall watch-tower of Warwick's mighty mansion, frowned in the distance, against the soft blue sky. "There," said Adam, quietly, and pointing to the feudal roofs, "there seems

to rise power—and yonder (glancing to the river), yonder seems to flow Genius! A century or so hence, the walls shall vanish, but the river shall roll on. Man makes the castle, and founds the power—God forms the river and creates the Genius. And yet, Sibyll, there may be streams as broad and stately as yonder Thames, that flow afar in the waste, never seen, never heard by man, what profits the river unmarked?—what the genius never to be known?"

It was not a common thing with Adam Warner to be thus eloquent. Usually silent and absorbed, it was not his gift to moralize or declaim. His soul must be deeply moved before the profound and buried sentiment within it could escape into words.

Sibyll pressed her father's hand, and, though her own heart was very heavy, she forced her lips to smile and her voice to soothe. Adam interrupted her.

"Child, child, ye women know not what presses darkest and most bitterly on the minds of men. You know not what it is to form out of immaterial things some abstract but glorious object—to worship—to serve it—to sacrifice to it, as on an altar, youth, health, hope, life—and suddenly, in old age, to see that the idol was a phantom, a mockery, a shadow laughing us to scorn, because we have sought to clasp it."

"Oh, yes, father, women have known that illusion."

"What! Do they study?"

"No, father, but they feel!"

"Feel! I comprehend thee not."

"As man's genius to him, is woman's heart to her," answered Sibyll, her dark and deep eyes suffused with tears. "Doth not the heart create—invent? Doth it not dream? Doth it not form its idol out of air? Goeth it not forth into the future, to prophesy to itself?

And, sooner or later, in age or youth, doth it not wake at last, and see how it hath wasted its all on follies? Yes, father, my heart can answer, when thy genius would complain."

"Sibyll," said Warner, roused and surprised, and gazing on her wistfully, "time flies apace. Till this hour I have thought of thee but as a child—an infant. Thy words disturb me now."

"Think not of them, then. Let me never add one grief to thine."

"Thou art brave and gay in thy silken sheen," said Adam, curiously stroking down the rich, smooth stuff of Sibyll's tunic; "her grace the duchess is generous to us. Thou art surely happy here!"

"Happy!"

"Not happy!" exclaimed Adam, almost joyfully, "wouldst thou that we were back once more in our desolate ruined home?"

"Yes, oh, yes!—but rather away, far away, in some quiet village, some green nook; for the desolate, ruined home was not safe for thine old age."

"I would we could escape, Sibyll," said Adam, earnestly, in a whisper, and with a kind of innocent cunning in his eye, "we and the poor Eureka! This palace is a prison-house to me. I will speak to the Lord Hastings, a man of great excellence, and gentle too. He is ever kind to us."

"No, no, father, not to him," cried Sibyll, turning pale,—"let him not know a word of what we would propose, nor whither we would fly."

"Child, he loves me, or why does he seek me so often, and sit and talk not?"

Sibyll pressed her clasped hands tightly to her bosom, but made no answer; and, while she was sum-

moning courage to say something that seemed to oppress her thoughts with intolerable weight, a footstep sounded gently near, and the Lady of Bonville (then on a visit to the queen), unseen and unheard by the two, approached the spot. She paused, and gazed at Sibyll, at first haughtily; and then, as the deep sadness of that young face struck her softer feelings, and the pathetic picture of father and child, thus alone in their commune, made its pious and sweet effect, the gaze changed from pride to compassion, and the lady said, courteously—

"Fair mistress, canst thou prefer this solitary scene to the gay company about to take the air in her grace's gilded barge?"

Sibyll looked up in surprise, not unmixed with fear. Never before had the great lady spoken to her thus gently. Adam, who seemed for a while restored to the actual life, saluted Katherine with simple dignity, and took up the word—

"Noble lady, whoever thou art, in thine old age, and thine hour of care, may thy child, like this poor girl, forsake all gayer comrades for a parent's side!"

The answer touched the Lady of Bonville, and involuntarily she extended her hand to Sibyll. With a swelling heart, Sibyll, as proud as herself, bent silently over that rival's hand. Katherine's marble cheek coloured, as she interpreted the girl's silence.

"Gentle sir," she said, after a short pause, "wilt thou permit me a few words with thy fair daughter? and if in aught, since thou speakest of care, Lord Warwick's sister can serve thee, prithee bid thy young maiden impart it, as to a friend."

"Tell her, then, my Sibyll—tell Lord Warwick's sister, to ask the king to give back to Adam Warner

his poverty, his labour, and his hope," said the scholar, and his noble head sank gloomily on his bosom.

The Lady of Bonville, still holding Sibyll's hand, drew her a few paces up the walk, and then she said suddenly, and with some of that blunt frankness which belonged to her great brother, "Maiden, can there be confidence between thee and me?"

"Of what nature, lady?"

Again Katherine blushed, but she felt the small hand she held tremble in her clasp, and was emboldened—

"Maiden, thou mayst resent and marvel at my words; but, when I had fewer years than thou, my father said, 'There are many carks in life which a little truth could end.' So would I heed his lesson. William de Hastings has followed thee with a homage that has broken, perchance, many as pure a heart—nay, nay, fair child, hear me on. Thou hast heard that in youth he wooed Katherine Nevile—that we loved, and were severed. They who see us now, marvel whether we hate or love,—no, *not* love—that question were an insult to Lord Bonville's wife!—Ofttimes we seem pitiless to each other,—why? Lord Hastings would have wooed me, an English matron, to forget mine honour and my house's. *He* chafes that he moves me not. *I* behold him debasing a great nature, to unworthy triflings with man's conscience and a knight's bright faith. But mark me!—the heart of Hastings is everlastingly mine, and mine alone! What seek I in this confidence? To warn thee. Wherefore? Because for months, amidst all the vices of this foul court-air—amidst the flatteries of the softest voice that ever fell upon woman's ear—amidst, peradventure, the pleadings of thine own young and guileless love—thine innocence is unscathed. And therefore Kath-

erine of Bonville may be the friend of Sibyll Warner."

However generous might be the true spirit of these words, it was impossible that they should not gall and humiliate the young and flattered beauty to whom they were addressed. They so wholly discarded all belief in the affection of Hastings for Sibyll; they so haughtily arrogated the mastery over his heart; they so plainly implied that his suit to the poor maiden was but a mockery or dishonour, that they made even the praise for virtue an affront to the delicate and chaste ear on which they fell. And, therefore, the reader will not be astonished, though the Lady of Bonville certainly was, when Sibyll, drawing her hand from Katherine's clasp, stopping short, and calmly folding her arms upon her bosom, said—

"To what this tends, lady, I know not. The Lord Hastings is free to carry his homage where he will. He has sought me—not I Lord Hastings. And if to-morrow he offered me his hand, I would reject it, if I were not convinced that the heart——"

"Damsel," interrupted the Lady Bonville, in amazed contempt, "the hand of Lord Hastings! Look ye indeed so high, or has he so far paltered with your credulous youth as to speak to you, the daughter of the alchemist, of marriage. If so, poor child, beware!"

"I knew not," replied Sibyll, bitterly, "that Sibyll Warner was more below the state of Lord Hastings, than Master Hastings was once below the state of Lady Katherine Nevile."

"Thou art distraught with thy self-conceit," answered the dame, scornfully; and, losing all the compassion and friendly interest she had before felt, "my

rede is spoken—reject it if thou wilt, in pride. Rue thy folly thou wilt in shame."

She drew her wimple round her face as she said these words, and, gathering up her long robe, swept slowly on.

CHAPTER III

WHEREIN THE DEMAGOGUE SEEKS THE COURTIER

On quitting Adam's chamber, Hilyard paused not till he reached a stately house, not far from Warwick Lane, which was the residence of the Lord Montagu.

That nobleman was employed in reading, or rather, in pondering over, two letters, with which a courier from Calais had just arrived—the one from the archbishop, the other from Warwick. In these epistles were two passages, strangely contradictory in their counsel. A sentence in Warwick's letter ran thus: "It hath reached me, that certain disaffected men meditate a rising against the king, under pretext of wrongs from the queen's kin. It is even said that our kinsmen, Coniers and Fitzhugh, are engaged therein. Need I caution thee to watch well that they bring our name into no disgrace or attaint. We want no aid to right our own wrongs; and if the misguided men rebel, Warwick will best punish Edward, by proving that he is yet of use."

On the other hand, thus wrote the prelate:—

"The king, wroth with my visit to Calais, has taken from me the chancellor's seal. I humbly thank him, and shall sleep the lighter for the fardel's loss. Now, mark me, Montagu: our kinsman, Lord Fitzhugh's son, and young Henry Nevile, aided by old Sir John

Coniers, meditate a fierce and well-timed assault upon the Woodvilles. Do thou keep neuter—neither help nor frustrate it. Howsoever it end, it will answer our views, and shake our enemies."

Montagu was yet musing over these tidings, and marvelling that he in England should know less than his brethren in Calais of events so important, when his page informed him that a stranger, with urgent messages from the north country, craved an audience. Imagining that these messages would tend to illustrate the communications just received, he ordered the visitor to be admitted.

He scarcely noticed Hilyard on his entrance, and said, abruptly, "Speak shortly, friend—I have but little leisure."

"And yet, Lord Montagu, my business may touch thee home!"

Montagu, surprised, gazed more attentively on his visitor: "Surely, I know thy face, friend—we have met before."

"True; thou wert then on thy way to the More."

"I remember me; and thou then seem'dst, from thy bold words, on a still shorter road to the gallows."

"The tree is not planted," said Robin, carelessly, "that will serve for my gibbet. But were there no words uttered by me that thou couldst not disapprove? I spoke of lawless disorders—of shameful malfaisance throughout the land—which the Woodvilles govern under a lewd tyrant——"

"Traitor, hold!"

"A tyrant," continued Robin (heeding not the interruption nor the angry gesture of Montagu), "a tyrant who at this moment meditates the destruction of the house of Nevile. And not contented with this

world's weapons, palters with the Evil One for the snares and devilries of witchcraft."

"Hush, man! Not so loud," said Montagu, in an altered voice. "Approach nearer—nearer yet. They who talk of a crowned king—whose right hand raises armies, and whose left hand reposes on the block—should beware how they speak above their breath. Witchcraft, sayest thou? Make thy meaning clear."

Here Robin detailed, with but little exaggeration, the scene he had witnessed in Friar Bungey's chamber—the waxen image, the menaces against the Earl of Warwick, and the words of the friar, naming the Duchess of Bedford as his employer. Montagu listened in attentive silence. Though not perfectly free from the credulities of the time, shared even by the courageous heart of Edward, and the piercing intellect of Gloucester, he was yet more alarmed by such proofs of determined earthly hostility in one so plotting and so near to the throne as the Duchess of Bedford, than by all the pins and needles that could be planted into the earl's waxen counterpart——

"A devilish malice, indeed," said he, when Hilyard had concluded; "and yet this story, if thou wilt adhere to it, may serve us well at need. I thank thee, trusty friend, for thy confidence, and beseech thee to come at once with me to the king. There will I denounce our foe, and, with thine evidence, we will demand her banishment."

"By your leave, not a step will I budge, my Lord Montagu," quoth Robin, bluntly—"I know how these matters are managed at court. The king will patch up a peace between the duchess and you, and chop off my ears and nose as a liar and common scandal-maker. No, no; denounce the duchess and all the Woodvilles,

I will;—but it shall not be in the halls of the Tower, but on the broad plains of Yorkshire, with twenty thousand men at my back."

"Ha! thou a leader of armies—and for what end?—to dethrone the king?"

"That as it may be—but first for justice to the people; it is the people's rising that I will head, and not a faction's. Neither White Rose nor Red shall be on my banner, but our standard shall be the gory head of the first oppressor we can place upon a pole."

"What is it, the people, as you word it, would demand?"

"I scarce know what we demand as yet—that must depend upon how we prosper," returned Hilyard, with a bitter laugh; "but the rising will have some good, if it shows only to you lords and Normans, that a Saxon people does exist, and will turn when the iron heel is upon its neck. We are taxed, ground, pillaged, plundered—sheep, maintained to be sheared for your peace, or butchered for your war. And now will we have a petition and a charter of our own, Lord Montagu. I speak frankly—I am in thy power—thou canst arrest me—thou canst strike off the head of this revolt. Thou art the king's friend—wilt thou do so? No, thou and thy house have wrongs as well as we, the people. And a part at least of our demands and our purpose is your own."

"What part, bold man?"

"This: we shall make our first complaint the baneful domination of the queen's family; and demand the banishment of the Woodvilles, root and stem."

"Hem!" said Montagu, involuntarily glancing over the archbishop's letter,—"hem, but without outrage to the king's state and person?"

"Oh, trust me, my lord, the franklin's head contains as much north-country cunning as the noble's. They who would speed well, must feel their way cautiously."

"Twenty thousand men — impossible! Who art thou, to collect and head them?"

"Plain Robin of Redesdale."

"Ha!" exclaimed Montagu, "is it indeed, as I was taught to suspect! Art thou that bold, strange, mad fellow, whom, by pike and brand—a soldier's oath—I, a soldier, have often longed to see. Let me look at thee. 'Fore St. George, a tall man, and well knit, with dareiment on thy brow. Why, there are as many tales of thee in the north, as of my brother the earl. Some say thou art a lord of degree and birth, others that thou art the robber of Hexham, to whom Margaret of Anjou trusted her own life and her son's."

"Whatever they say of me," returned Robin, "they all agree in this, that I am a man of honest word and bold deed—that I can stir up the hearts of men, as the wind stirreth fire; that I came an unknown stranger into the parts where I abide, and that no peer in this roiaulme, save Warwick himself, can do more to raise an army or shake a throne."

"But by what spell?"

"By men's wrongs, lord," answered Robin, in a deep voice;—"and now, ere this moon wanes, Redesdale is a camp!"

"What the immediate cause of complaint?"

"The hospital of St. Leonard's has compelled us unjustly to render them a thrave of corn."

"Thou art a cunning knave! Pinch the belly if you would make Englishmen rise."

"True," said Robin, smiling grimly—"and now—what say you—will you head us?"

"Head you! No!"

"Will you betray us?"

"It is not easy to betray twenty thousand men; if ye rise merely to free yourselves from a corn-tax and England from the Woodvilles, I see no treason in your revolt."

"I understand you, Lord Montagu," said Robin, with a stern and half-scornful smile—"you are not above thriving by our danger; but we need now no lord and baron—we will suffice for ourselves. And the hour will come, believe me, when Lord Warwick, pursued by the king, must fly to the commons. Think well of these things and this prophecy, when the news from the north startles Edward of March in the lap of his harlots."

Without saying another word, he turned and quitted the chamber as abruptly as he had entered.

Lord Montagu was not, for his age, a bad man; though worldly, subtle, and designing; with some of the craft of his prelate brother, he united something of the high soul of his brother soldier. But that age had not the virtue of later times, and cannot be judged by its standard. He heard this bold dare-devil menace his country with civil war upon grounds not plainly stated, nor clearly understood—he aided not, but he connived: "Twenty thousand men in arms," he muttered to himself—"say half—well, ten thousand—not against Edward, but the Woodvilles! It must bring the king to his senses—must prove to him how odious the mushroom race of the Woodvilles, and drive him for safety and for refuge to Montagu and Warwick. If the knaves presume too far," (and Montagu smiled) —"what are undisciplined multitudes to the eye of a skilful captain? Let the storm blow, we will guide the blast. In this world man must make use of man."

CHAPTER IV

SIBYLL

While Montagu, in anxious forethought, awaited the revolt that Robin of Redesdale had predicted—while Edward feasted and laughed, merry-made with his courtiers, and aided the conjugal duties of his good citizens in London—while the queen and her father, Lord Rivers, more and more in the absence of Warwick, encroached on all the good things power can bestow and avarice seize—while the Duchess of Bedford and Friar Bungey toiled hard at the waxen effigies of the great earl, who still held his royal son-in-law in his court at Calais—the stream of our narrative winds from its noisier channels, and lingers, with a quiet wave, around the temple of a virgin's heart. Wherefore is Sibyll sad? Some short month since, and we beheld her gay with hope, and basking in the sunny atmosphere of pleasure and of love. The mind of this girl was a singular combination of tenderness and pride—the first wholly natural, the last the result of circumstance and position. She was keenly conscious of her gentle birth, and her earlier prospects in the court of Margaret; and the poverty, and distress and solitude in which she had grown up from the child into the woman, had only served to strengthen what, in her nature, was already strong, and to heighten whatever was already proud. Ever in her youngest dreams of the future, ambition had visibly blent itself with the vague ideas of love. The imagined wooer was less to be young and fair, than renowned and stately. She viewed him through the mists of the future, as the protector of her persecuted father—as

the rebuilder of a fallen house—as the ennobler of a humbled name. And from the moment in which her girl's heart beat at the voice of Hastings, the ideal of her soul seemed found. And when transplanted to the court, she learned to judge of her native grace and loveliness by the common admiration they excited, her hopes grew justified to her inexperienced reason. Often and ever the words of Hastings, at the house of the Lady Longueville, rang in her ear, and thrilled through the solitude of night—"Whoever is fair and chaste, gentle and loving, is, in the eyes of William de Hastings, the mate and equal of a king." In visits that she had found opportunity to make to the Lady Longueville, these hopes were duly fed; for the old Lancastrian detested the Lady Bonville, as Lord Warwick's sister, and she would have reconciled her pride to view with complacency his alliance with the alchemist's daughter, if it led to his estrangement from the memory of his first love; and, therefore, when her quick eye penetrated the secret of Sibyll's heart, and when she witnessed—for Hastings often encountered (and seemed to seek the encounter) the young maid at Lady Longueville's house—the unconcealed admiration which justified Sibyll in her high-placed affection, she scrupled not to encourage the blushing girl, by predictions in which she forced her own better judgment to believe. Nor, when she learned Sibyll's descent from a family that had once ranked as high as that of Hastings, would she allow that there was any disparity in the alliance she foretold. But more, far more than Lady Longueville's assurances, did the delicate and unceasing gallantries of Hastings himself flatter the fond faith of Sibyll. True, that he spoke not actually of love, but every look implied, every whisper seemed

to betray it. And to her he spoke as to an equal, not in birth alone, but in mind; so superior was she in culture, in natural gifts, and, above all, in that train of high thought, and elevated sentiment, in which genius ever finds a sympathy, to the court-flutterers of her sex, that Hastings, whether or not he cherished a warmer feeling, might well take pleasure in her converse, and feel the lovely infant worthy the wise man's trust. He spoke to her without reserve of the Lady Bonville, and he spoke with bitterness. "I loved her," he said, "as woman is rarely loved. She deserted me for another—rather should she have gone to the convent than the altar; and now, forsooth, she deems she hath the right to taunt and to rate me, to dictate to me the way I should walk, and to flaunt the honours I have won."

"May that be no sign of a yet tender interest?" said Sibyll, timidly.

The eyes of Hastings sparkled for a moment, but the gleam vanished. "Nay, you know her not. Her heart is marble, as hard and as cold. Her very virtue but the absence of emotion—I would say, of gentler emotion—for, pardieu, such emotions as come from ire and pride and scorn, are the daily growth of that stern soil. Oh, happy was my escape!—happy the desertion, which my young folly deemed a curse. No!" he added, with a sarcastic quiver of his lip—"No; what stings and galls the Lady of Harrington and Bonville—what makes her countenance change in my presence, and her voice sharpen at my accost, is plainly this: in wedding her dull lord, and rejecting me, Katherine Nevile deemed she wedded power, and rank, and station; and now, while we are both young, how proves her choice? The Lord of Harrington and Bon-

ville is so noted a dolt, that even the Neviles cannot help him to rise—the meanest office is above his mind's level; and, dragged down by the heavy clay to which her wings are yoked, Katherine, Lady of Harrington and Bonville—oh, give her her due titles!—is but a pageant figure in the court. If the war-trump blew, his very vassals would laugh at a Bonville's banner, and beneath the flag of poor William de Hastings would gladly march the best chivalry of the land. And this it is, I say, that galls her. For evermore she is driven to compare the state she holds as the dame of the accepted Bonville, with that she lost as the wife of the disdained Hastings."

And if, in the heat and passion that such words betrayed, Sibyll sighed to think that something of the old remembrance yet swelled and burned, they but impressed her more with the value of a heart, in which the characters once writ endured so long,—and roused her to a tender ambition to heal and to console.

Then looking into her own deep soul, Sibyll beheld there a fund of such generous, pure, and noble affection—such reverence as to the fame—such love as to the man, that she proudly felt herself worthier of Hastings than the haughty Katherine. She entered then, as it were, the lists with this rival—a memory rather, so she thought, than a corporeal being; and her eye grew brighter, her step statelier, in the excitement of the contest—the anticipation of the triumph. For, what diamond without its flaw? What rose without its canker? And bedded deep in that exquisite and charming nature, lay the dangerous and fatal weakness which has cursed so many victims, broken so many hearts—the vanity of the sex. We may now readily conceive how little predisposed was Sibyll to

the blunt advances and displeasing warnings of the Lady Bonville, and the more so from the time in which they chanced. For here comes the answer to the question—"Why was Sibyll sad?"

The reader may determine for himself what were the ruling motives of Lord Hastings in the court he paid to Sibyll. Whether to pique the Lady Bonville, and force upon her the jealous pain he restlessly sought to inflict—whether, from the habit of his careless life, seeking the pleasure of the moment, with little forethought of the future, and reconciling itself to much cruelty, by that profound contempt for human beings, man, and still more for woman, which sad experience often brings to acute intellect—or whether, from the purer and holier complacency with which one, whose youth has fed upon nobler aspirations than manhood cares to pursue, suns itself back to something of its earlier lustre in the presence and the converse of a young bright soul:—Whatever, in brief, the earlier motives of gallantries to Sibyll, once begun, constantly renewed,—by degrees wilder, and warmer, and guiltier emotions, roused up in the universal and all-conquering lover the vice of his softer nature. When calm and unimpassioned his conscience had said to him—"Thou shalt spare that flower." But when once the passion was roused within him, the purity of the flower was forgotten in the breath of its voluptuous sweetness.

And but three days before the scene we have described with Katherine, Sibyll's fabric of hope fell to the dust. For Hastings spoke for the first time of love—for the first time knelt at her feet—for the first time, clasping to his heart that virgin hand, poured forth the protestation and the vow. And oh! woe—woe! for the first time she learned how cheaply the

great man held the poor maiden's love, how little he deemed that purity and genius and affection equalled the possessor of fame and wealth and power; for plainly visible, boldly shown and spoken, the love that she had foreseen as a glory from the Heaven, sought but to humble her to the dust.

The anguish of that moment was unspeakable—and she spoke it not. But as she broke from the profaning clasp, as escaping to the threshold, she cast on the unworthy wooer one look of such reproachful sorrow, as told at once all her love and all her horror,—the first act in the eternal tragedy of man's wrong and woman's grief was closed. And therefore was Sibyll sad!

CHAPTER V

KATHERINE

For several days Hastings avoided Sibyll; in truth, he felt remorse for his design, and in his various, active, and brilliant life, he had not the leisure for obstinate and systematic siege to a single virtue, nor was he, perhaps, any longer capable of deep and enduring passion; his heart, like that of many a chevalier in the earlier day, had lavished itself upon one object, and sullenly, upon regrets and dreams, and vain anger and idle scorn, it had exhausted those sentiments which make the sum of true love. And so, like Petrarch, whom his taste and fancy worshipped, and many another votary of the *gentil Dieu,* while his imagination devoted itself to the chaste and distant ideal—the spiritual Laura—his senses, ever vagrant and disengaged, settled, without scruple, upon the thousand Cynthias

of the minute. But then, those Cynthias were, for the most part, and especially of late years, easy and light-won nymphs; their coyest were of another clay from the tender but lofty Sibyll. And Hastings shrunk from the cold-blooded and deliberate seduction of one so pure, while he could not reconcile his mind to contemplate marriage with a girl who could give nothing to his ambition; and yet it was not, in this last reluctance, only his ambition that startled and recoiled. In that strange tyranny over his whole soul, which Katherine Bonville secretly exercised, he did not dare to place a new barrier evermore between her and himself. The Lord Bonville was of infirm health; he had been more than once near to death's door, and Hastings, in every succeeding fancy that beguiled his path, recalled the thrill of his heart, when it had whispered, "Katherine, the loved of thy youth, may yet be thine!" And then that Katherine rose before him, not as she now swept the earth, with haughty step and frigid eye, and disdainful lip, but as—in all her bloom of maiden beauty, before the temper was soured, or the pride aroused,—she had met him in the summer twilight, by the trysting-tree;—broken with him the golden ring of faith, and wept upon his bosom.

And yet, during his brief and self-inflicted absence from Sibyll, this wayward and singular personage, who was never weak, but to women, and ever weak to them, felt that she had made herself far dearer to him than he had at first supposed it possible. He missed that face, ever, till the last interview, so confiding in the unconsciously betrayed affection. He felt how superior in sweetness, and yet in intellect, Sibyll was to Katherine; there was more in common between her mind and his in all things, save one. But oh, *that one*

exception!—what a world lies within it—*the memory of the spring of life!* In fact, though Hastings knew it not, he was in love with two objects at once; the one, a chimera, a fancy, an ideal, an Eidolon, under the name of Katherine; the other, youth, and freshness, and mind, and heart, and a living shape of beauty, under the name of Sibyll. Often does this double love happen to men; but when it does, alas for the human object! for the shadowy and the spiritual one is immortal,—until, indeed, it be possessed!

It might be, perhaps, with a resolute desire to conquer the new love and confirm the old, that Hastings, one morning, repaired to the house of the Lady Bonville, for her visit to the court had expired. It was a large mansion, without the Lud Gate.

He found the dame in a comely chamber, seated in the sole chair the room contained, to which was attached a foot-board that served as a dais, while around her, on low stools, sate—some spinning, others broidering—some ten or twelve young maidens of good family, sent to receive their nurturing under the high-born Katherine,* while two other and somewhat elder virgins sate a little apart, but close under the eye of the lady, practising the courtly game of "prime:" for the diversion of cards was in its zenith of fashion under Edward IV., and even half a century later was considered one of the essential accomplishments of a well-educated young lady.† The exceeding stiffness,

* And strange as it may seem to modern notions, the highest lady who received such pensioners accepted a befitting salary for their board and education.

† So the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., at the age of fourteen, exhibits her skill, in prime or trump, to her betrothed husband, James IV. of Scotland; so, among the womanly arts of the unhappy Katherine of Arragon, it is mentioned that she could play at "cardis and dyce." (See Strutt's

the solemn silence of this female circle, but little accorded with the mood of the graceful visitor. The demoiselles stirred not at his entrance, and Katherine quietly motioned him to a seat at some distance.

"By your leave, fair lady," said Hastings, "I rebel against so distant an exile from such sweet company;" and he moved the tabouret close to the formidable chair of the presiding chieftainess.

Katherine smiled faintly, but not in displeasure.

"So gay a presence," she said, "must, I fear me, a little disturb these learners."

Hastings glanced at the prim demureness written on each blooming visage, and replied—

"You wrong their ardour in such noble studies. I would wager that nothing less than my entering your bower on horseback, with helm on head and lance in rest, could provoke even a smile from one pair of the twenty rosy lips round which, methinks, I behold Cupido hovering in vain!"

The Baroness bent her stately brows, and the twenty rosy lips were all tightly pursed up, to prevent the indecorous exhibition which the wicked courtier had provoked. But it would not do: one and all the twenty lips broke into a smile—but a smile so tortured, constrained, and nipped in the bud, that it only gave an expression of pain to the features it was forbidden to enliven.

"And what brings the Lord Hastings hither?" asked the baroness, in a formal tone.

"Can you never allow, for motive, the desire of pleasure, fair dame?"

"Games and Pastimes," Hone's edition, p. 327.) The legislature was very anxious to keep these games sacred to the aristocracy, and very wroth with 'prentices and the vulgar for imitating the ruinous amusements of their betters.

That peculiar and exquisite blush, which at moments changed the whole physiognomy of Katherine, flitted across her smooth cheek, and vanished. She said, gravely—

"So much do I allow it in you, my lord, that hence my question."

"Katherine!" exclaimed Hastings, in a voice of tender reproach, and attempting to seize her hand, forgetful of all other presence save that to which the blush, that spoke of old, gave back the ancient charm.

Katherine cast a hurried and startled glance over the maiden group, and her eye detected on the automaton faces one common expression of surprise. Humbled and deeply displeased, she rose from the awful chair, and then, as suddenly reseating herself, she said, with a voice and lip of the most cutting irony, "My lord chamberlain is, it seems, so habituated to lackey his king amidst the goldsmiths and grocers, that he forgets the form of language and respect of bearing which a noblewoman of repute is accustomed to consider seemly."

Hastings bit his lip, and his falcon eye shot indignant fire. "Pardon, my Lady of Bonville and Harrington, I did indeed forget what reasons the dame of so wise and so renowned a lord hath to feel pride in the titles she hath won. But I see that my visit hath chanced out of season. My business, in truth, was rather with my lord, whose counsel in peace is as famous as his truncheon in war!"

"It is enough," replied Katherine, with a dignity that rebuked the taunt, "that Lord Bonville has the name of an honest man,—who never rose at court."

"Woman, without one soft woman-feeling!" muttered Hastings, between his ground teeth, as he ap-

proached the lady and made his profound obeisance. The words were intended only for Katherine's ear, and they reached it. Her bosom swelled beneath the brocaded gorget, and when the door closed on Hastings, she pressed her hands convulsively together, and her dark eyes were raised upward.

"My child, thou art entangling thy skein," said the Lady of Bonville, as she passed one of the maidens, towards the casement, which she opened,—"The air to-day weighs heavily!"

CHAPTER VI

JOY FOR ADAM, AND HOPE FOR SIBYLL—AND POPULAR FRIAR BUNGEY!

Leaping on his palfrey, Hastings rode back to the Tower—dismounted at the gate—passed on to the little postern in the inner court—and paused not till he was in Warner's room.

"How now, friend Adam? Thou art idle."

"Lord Hastings, I am ill."

"And thy child not with thee?"

"She is gone to her grace the duchess, to pray her to grant me leave to go home, and waste no more life on making gold."

"Home! Go hence! We cannot hear it! The duchess must not grant it. I will not suffer the king to lose so learned a philosopher."

"Then pray the king to let the philosopher achieve that which is in the power of labour." He pointed to the Eureka. "Let me be heard in the king's council, and prove to sufficing judges what this iron can do for England."

"Is that all? So be it. I will speak to his highness forthwith. But promise that thou wilt think no more of leaving the king's palace."

"Oh, no, no! If I may enter again into mine own palace—mine own royalty of craft and hope—the court or the dungeon all one to me!"

"Father," said Sibyll, entering, "be comforted. The duchess forbids thy departure, but we will yet flee——"

She stopped short as she saw Hastings. He approached her timidly, and with so repentant, so earnest a respect in his mien and gesture, that she had not the heart to draw back the fair hand he lifted to his lips.

"No, flee not, sweet donzelle; leave not the desert court, without the flower and the laurel, the beauty and the wisdom, that scent the hour, and foretype eternity. I have conferred with thy father—I will obtain his prayer from the king. His mind shall be free to follow its own impulse—and thou—(he whispered)—pardon—pardon an offence of too much love. Never shall it wound again."

Her eyes, swimming with delicious tears, were fixed upon the floor. Poor child! with so much love, how could she cherish anger? With so much purity, how distrust herself? And while, at least, he spoke, the dangerous lover was sincere. So from that hour peace was renewed between Sibyll and Lord Hastings.—Fatal peace! alas for the girl who loves—and has no mother!

True to his word, the courtier braved the displeasure of the Duchess of Bedford, in inducing the king to consider the expediency of permitting Adam to relinquish alchemy, and repair his model. Edward summoned a deputation from the London merchants and traders, before whom Adam appeared and explained his device. But these practical men at first ridiculed the notion as

a madman's fancy, and it required all the art of Hastings to overcome their contempt, and appeal to the native acuteness of the king. Edward, however, was only caught by Adam's incidental allusions to the application of his principle to ships. The merchant-king suddenly roused himself to attention, when it was promised to him that his galleys could cross the seas without sail, and against wind and tide.

"By St. George!" said he then, "let the honest man have his whim. Mend thy model, and every saint in the calendar speed thee! Master Heyford, tell thy comely wife that I and Hastings will sup with her tomorrow, for her hippocras is a rare dainty. Good day to you, worshipful my masters. Hastings, come hither —enough of these trifles—I must confer with thee on matters really pressing—this damnable marriage of gentle George's!"

And now Adam Warner was restored to his native element of thought; now the crucible was at rest, and the Eureka began to rise from its ruins. He knew not the hate that he had acquired, in the permission he had gained; for the London deputies, on their return home, talked of nothing else for a whole week, but the favour the king had shown to a strange man, half-maniac, half-conjuror, who had undertaken to devise a something which would throw all the artisans and journeymen out of work! From merchant to mechanic travelled the news, and many an honest man cursed the great scholar, as he looked at his young children, and wished to have one good blow at the head that was hatching such devilish malice against the poor! The name of Adam Warner became a byword of scorn and horror. Nothing less than the deep ditch and strong walls of the Tower could have saved him from the

popular indignation; and these prejudices were skilfully fed by the jealous enmity of his fellow-student, the terrible Friar Bungey. This man, though in all matters of true learning and science worthy the utmost contempt Adam could heap upon him, was by no means of despicable abilities in the arts of imposing upon men. In his youth he had been an itinerant mountebank, or, as it was called, *tregetour*. He knew well all the curious tricks of juggling that, then, amazed the vulgar, and, we fear, are lost to the craft of our modern necromancers. He could clothe a wall with seeming vines, that vanished as you approached; he could conjure up in his quiet cell the likeness of a castle manned with soldiers, or a forest tenanted by deer.* Besides these illusions, probably produced by more powerful magic lanterns than are now used, the friar had stumbled upon the wondrous effects of animal magnetism, which was then unconsciously practised by the alchemists or cultivators of white or sacred magic. He was an adept in the craft of fortune-telling; and his intimate acquaintance with all noted characters in the metropolis, their previous history, and present circumstances, enabled his natural shrewdness to hit the mark, at least now and then, in his oracular predictions. He had taken, for safety and for bread, the friar's robes, and had long enjoyed the confidence of the Duchess of Bedford, the traditional descendant of the serpent-witch, Melusina. Moreover, and in this the friar especially valued himself, Bungey had, in the course of his hardy, vagrant early life, studied, as shepherds and mariners do now, the signs of the weather;

* See Chaucer, "House of Time," Book iii.; also the account given by Baptista Porta, of his own Magical Delusions, of which an extract may be seen in the "Curiosities of Literature."—Art., Dreams at the Dawn of Philosophy.

and as weather-glasses were then unknown, nothing could be more convenient to the royal planners of a summer chase or a hawking company, than the neighbourhood of a skilful predictor of storm and sunshine. In fact, there was no part in the lore of magic which the popular seers found so useful and studied so much as that which enabled them to prognosticate the humours of the sky, at a period when the lives of all men were principally spent in the open air.

The Fame of Friar Bungey had travelled much farther than the repute of Adam Warner: it was known in the distant provinces: and many a northern peasant grew pale as he related to his gaping listeners the tales he had heard of the Duchess Jacquetta's dread magician.

And yet, though the friar was an atrocious knave, and a ludicrous impostor, on the whole he was by no means unpopular, especially in the metropolis, for he was naturally a jolly, social fellow: he often ventured boldly forth into the different hostelries and reunions of the populace, and enjoyed the admiration he there excited, and pocketed the groats he there collected. He had no pride—none in the least, this Friar Bungey!—and was as affable as a magician could be to the meanest mechanic who crossed his broad horn palm. A vulgar man is never unpopular with the vulgar. Moreover, the friar, who was a very cunning person, wished to keep well with the mob: he was fond of his own impudent, cheating, burly carcase, and had the prudence to foresee that a time might come when his royal patrons might forsake him, and a mob might be a terrible monster to meet in his path; therefore he always affected to love the poor, often told their fortunes gratis, now and then gave them something to drink, and was

esteemed a man exceedingly good-natured, because he did not always have the devil at his back.

Now Friar Bungey had, naturally enough, evinced from the first a great distaste and jealousy of Adam Warner; but occasionally profiting by the science of the latter, he suffered his resentment to sleep latent till it was roused into fury by learning the express favour shown to Adam by the king, and the marvellous results expected from his contrivance. His envy, then, forbade all tolerance and mercy; the world was not large enough to contain two such giants—Bungey and Warner—the genius and the quack. To the best of our experience, the quacks have the same creed to our own day. He vowed deep vengeance upon his associate, and spared no arts to foment the popular hatred against him. Friar Bungey would have been a great critic in our day!

But besides his jealousy, the fat friar had another motive for desiring poor Adam's destruction; he coveted his model! True, he despised the model, he jeered the model, he abhorred the model; but, nevertheless, for the model, every string in his bowels fondly yearned. He believed that if that model were once repaired, and in his possession, he could do—what he knew not—but certainly all that was wanting to complete his glory, and to bubble the public.

Unconscious of all that was at work against him, Adam threw his whole heart and soul into his labour, and happy in his happiness, Sibyll once more smiled gratefully upon Hastings, from whom the rapture came.

CHAPTER VII

A LOVE SCENE

More than ever chafed against Katherine, Hastings surrendered himself, without reserve, to the charm he found in the society of Sibyll. Her confidence being again restored, again her mind showed itself to advantage, and the more because her pride was farther roused, to assert the equality with rank and gold which she took from nature and from God.

It so often happens that the first love of woman is accompanied with a bashful timidity, which overcomes the effort, while it increases the desire, to shine, that the union of love and timidity has been called inseparable, in the hackneyed language of every love-tale. But this is no invariable rule, as Shakespeare has shown us in the artless Miranda, in the eloquent Juliet, in the frank and healthful Rosalind;—and the love of Sibyll was no common girl's spring-fever of sighs and blushes. It lay in the mind, the imagination, the intelligence, as well as in the heart and fancy. It was a breeze that stirred from the modest leaves of the rose all their diviner odour. It was impossible but what this strong, fresh, young nature, with its free gaiety when happy—its earnest pathos when sad—its various faculties of judgment and sentiment, and covert play of innocent wit—should not contrast forcibly, in the mind of a man who had the want to be amused and interested,—with the cold pride of Katherine, the dull atmosphere in which her stiff, unbending virtue, breathed unintellectual air, and still more with the dressed puppets, with painted cheeks and barren talk,

who filled up the common world, under the name of women.

His feelings for Sibyll, therefore, took a more grave and respectful colour, and his attentions, if gallant ever, were those of a man wooing one whom he would make his wife, and studying the qualities in which he was disposed to intrust his happiness; and so pure was Sibyll's affection, that she could have been contented to have lived for ever thus—have seen and heard him daily—have talked but the words of friendship though with the thoughts of love; for some passions refine themselves through the very fire of the imagination into which the senses are absorbed, and by the ideal purification elevated up to spirit. Wrapped in the exquisite happiness she now enjoyed, Sibyll perceived not, or, if perceiving, scarcely heeded that the admirers, who had before fluttered round her, gradually dropped off—that the ladies of the court, the damsels who shared her light duties, grew distant and silent at her approach—that strange looks were bent on her—that sometimes when she and Hastings were seen together, the stern frowned and the godly crossed themselves.

The popular prejudices had reacted on the court. The wizard's daughter was held to share the gifts of her sire, and the fascination of beauty was imputed to evil spells. Lord Hastings was regarded,—especially by all the ladies he had once courted and forsaken,—as a man egregiously bewitched!

One day it chanced that Sibyll encountered Hastings in the walk that girded the ramparts of the tower. He was pacing musingly, with folded arms, when he raised his eyes and beheld her.

"And whither go you thus alone, fair mistress?"

"The duchess bade me seek the queen, who is taking

the air yonder. My lady has received some tidings she would impart to her highness."

"I was thinking of thee, fair damsel, when thy face brightened on my musings; and I was comparing thee to others, who dwell in the world's high places; and marvelling at the whims of fortune."

Sibyll smiled faintly, and answered, "Provoke not too much the aspiring folly of my nature. Content is better than ambition."

"Thou ownest thy ambition?" asked Hastings, curiously.

"Ah, sir, who hath it not?"

"But, for thy sweet sex, ambition has so narrow and cribbed a field."

"Not so; for it lives in others. I would say," continued Sibyll, colouring, fearful that she had betrayed herself, "for example, that so long as my father toils for fame, I breathe his hope, and am ambitious for his honour."

"And so, if thou wert wedded to one worthy of thee, in his ambition thou wouldst soar and dare?"

"Perhaps," answered Sibyll, coyly.

"But if thou wert wedded to sorrow, and poverty, and troublous care, thine ambition, thus struck dead, would of consequence strike dead thy love?"

"Nay, noble lord, nay—canst thou so wrong womanhood in me unworthy? for surely true ambition lives not only in the goods of fortune. Is there no nobler ambition than that of the vanity? Is there no ambition of the heart?—an ambition to console, to cheer the griefs of those who love and trust us?—an ambition to build a happiness out of the reach of fate?—an ambition to soothe some high soul, in its strife with a mean world—to lull to sleep its pain, to smile to

serenity its cares? Oh, methinks a woman's true ambition would rise the bravest when, in the very sight of death itself, the voice of him in whom her glory had dwelt through life should say, 'Thou fearest not to walk to the grave and to heaven by my side!'"

Sweet and thrilling were the tones in which these words were said—lofty and solemn the upward and tearful look with which they closed.

And the answer struck home to the native and original heroism of the listener's nature, before debased into the cynic sourness of worldly wisdom. Never had Katherine herself more forcibly recalled to Hastings the pure and virgin glory of his youth.

"Oh, Sibyll!" he exclaimed, passionately, and yielding to the impulse of the moment—"oh, that *for* me, as *to* me, such high words were said! Oh that all the triumphs of a life men call prosperous were excelled by the one triumph of waking such an ambition in such a heart!"

Sibyll stood before him transformed—pale, trembling, mute—and Hastings, clasping her hand and covering it with kisses, said—

"Dare I arede thy silence? Sibyll, thou lovest me! —Oh, Sibyll, speak!"

With a convulsive effort, the girl's lips moved, then closed, then moved again, into low and broken words.

"Why this—why this? Thou hadst promised not to —not to——"

"Not to insult thee by unworthy vows! Nor do I! But *as my wife!*" He paused abruptly, alarmed at his own impetuous words, and scared by the phantom of the world that rose like a bodily thing before the generous impulse, and grinned in scorn of his folly.

But Sibyll heard only that one holy word of WIFE,

and so sudden and so great was the transport it called forth, that her senses grew faint and dizzy, and she would have fallen to the earth but for the arms that circled her, and the breast upon which, now, the virgin might veil the blush that did not speak of shame.

With various feelings, both were a moment silent. But, oh, that moment! what centuries of bliss were crowded into it for the nobler and fairer nature!

At last, gently releasing herself, she put her hands before her eyes, as if to convince herself she was awake, and then, turning her lovely face full upon the wooer, Sibyll said, ingenuously—

"Oh, my lord—oh, Hastings! if thy calmer reason repent not these words—if thou canst approve in me what thou didst admire in Elizabeth the queen—if thou canst raise one who has no dower but her heart, to the state of thy wife and partner—by this hand, which I place fearlessly in thine, I pledge to thee such a love as minstrel hath never sung. No!" she continued, drawing loftily up her light stature,—"no, thou shalt not find me unworthy of thy name—mighty though it is, mightier though it shall be! I have a mind that can share thine objects, I have pride that can exult in thy power, courage to partake thy dangers, and devotion—" she hesitated, with the most charming blush—"but of *that,* sweet lord, thou shalt judge hereafter! This is my dowry—it is all!"

"And all I ask or covet," said Hastings. But his cheek had lost its first passionate glow. Lord of many a broad land and barony, victorious captain in many a foughten field, wise statesman in many a thoughtful stratagem, high in his king's favour, and linked with a nation's history—William de Hastings at that hour was as far below, as earth is to heaven, the poor maiden

whom he already repented to have so honoured, and whose sublime answer woke no echo from his heart.

Fortunately, as he deemed it, at that very instant he heard many steps rapidly approaching, and his own name called aloud by the voice of the king's body squire.

"Hark! Edward summons me," he said, with a feeling of reprieve. "Farewell, dear Sibyll, farewell for a brief while—we shall meet anon."

At this time, they were standing in that part of the rampart-walk which is now backed by the barracks of a modern soldiery, and before which, on the other side of the moat, lay a space that had seemed solitary and deserted; but, as Hastings, in speaking his adieu, hurriedly pressed his lips on Sibyll's forehead—from a tavern without the fortress, and opposite the spot on which they stood, suddenly sallied a disorderly troop of half-drunken soldiers, with a gang of the wretched women that always continue the classic association of a false Venus with a brutal Mars; and the last words of Hastings were scarcely spoken, before a loud laugh startled both himself and Sibyll, and a shudder came over her when she beheld the tinsel robes of the *tymbesteres* glittering in the sun, and heard their leader sing, as she darted from the arms of a reeling soldier:—

"Ha! death to the dove
Is the falcon's love.—
Oh! sharp is the kiss of the falcon's beak!"

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